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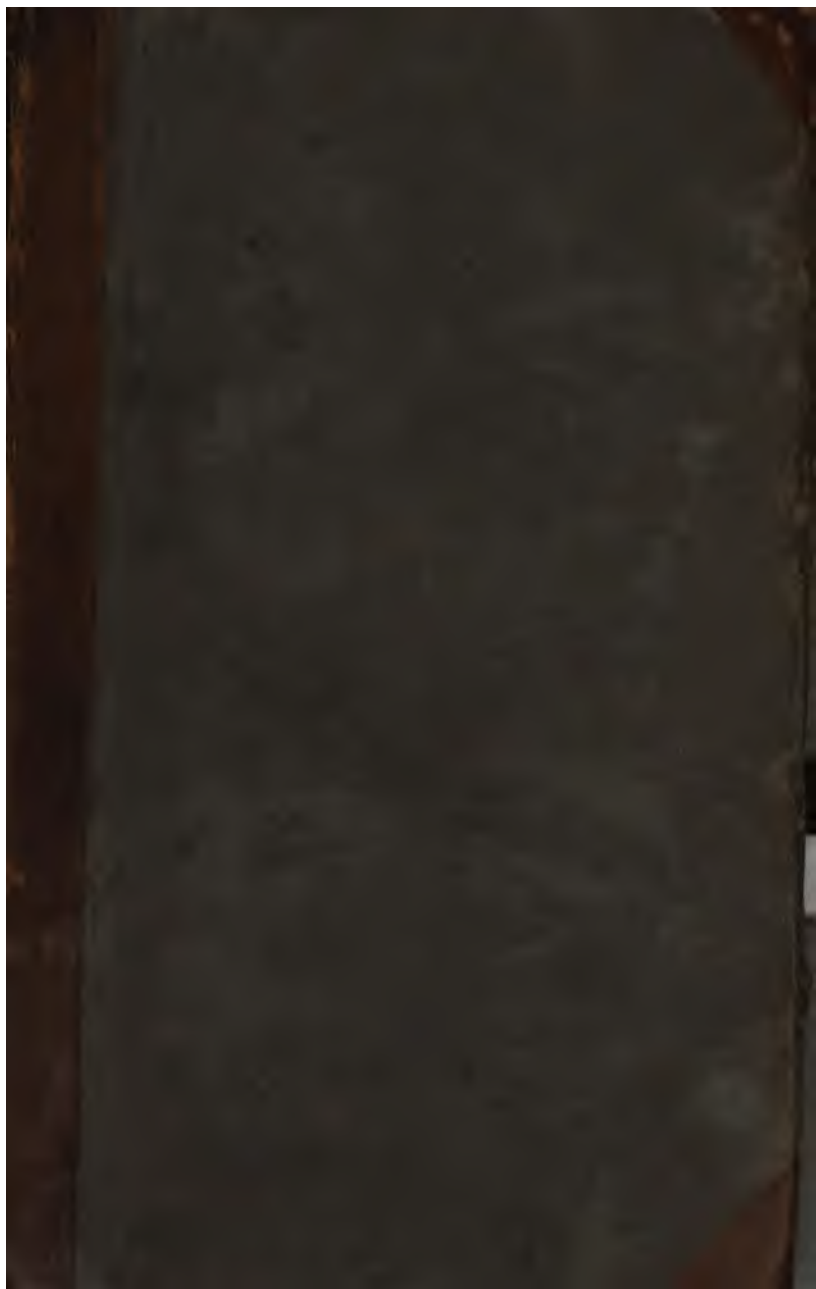
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STRIKING LIKENESSES;

OR,

THE VOTARIES OF FASHION.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY LOUISA SIDNEY STANHOPE,
Author of 'Montbrasil Abbey,' and 'The
Bandit's Bride.'

If I lash vice in general fiction,
Is't I apply't, or self-conviction?

GAY.

V O L. II.

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STRIKING LIKENESSES.

CHAP. I.

ANTONIA trembled as the carriage approached the vicarage; she knew not why, yet her heart beat with a strong and secret impulse: the account which sister Benedicta had given of her parents recurred to her memory: a sickening sensation bleached her cheeks, and compelled her to rest for support against the frame of the window.

Worlds would she have exchanged, had she possessed them, for the respite of a few hours:—the dreaded Geraldine, decked in all the boast of beauty,

presented herself to her view, and mocked her with exulting rivalry. Sir Frederic was the only witness of her emotion; Mrs. Moreland and the children were stationed at another window; and the doctor and Dauverne had hastened to the gate to receive the marquis, who was alone, having left his family at the Grange. His eyes were rivetted on her features, yet she perceived not his scrutiny, and when the carriage stopped, and the step was let down, flight was the momentary impulse: she sprung forward, Sir Frederic snatched her hand. "For mercy's sake let me pass," she murmured; "I cannot, cannot see him." "Why this agitation, Miss Forrester?" he inquired, throwing his arm round her waist, and forcibly detaining her. "Believe me, in the Marquis of Allingthorn you will find a friend, not a severe guardian. See, he comes! his appearance, I am sure,

is not appalling." Antonia looked up; the marquis approached the window—met her eyes—started—pressed his hand upon his forehead, and receded a few paces. At length with a smiling aspect he took her hand and raised it to his lips. "Antonia," he said, "I am not a stranger: in me acknowledge an old friend—a friend who in infancy has carried you—in youth will guard you—in maturity will bless you." "You knew then my parents," she articulated, in a voice scarcely audible. "I did—but no matter," he replied, in hurried accents; "I am their representative—I am your guardian: and if tenderness, affection, and care can supply the loss, you shall never feel it." Antonia could only sob her thanks; the marquis for many moments stood gazing intently on her, then starting from his reverie—"Pardon this agitation," he exclaimed, "but your resemblance, Miss Forrester, to a

departed angel, awakens emotions in my breast which have long lain dormant. I will now, for both our sakes, retire, and in the morning, I trust, we shall meet with more composure, when the marchioness and my daughters shall have conducted you to the Grange."

He again took her hand, kissed her cheek, and, followed by Dr. Moreland, abruptly quitted the room. "Tomorrow we shall feel quite deserted," said Mrs. Moreland, as they surrounded the supper table: "to lose two out of three," glancing at Antonia and Dauverne, "is rather too much." "Say not to lose," replied Dauverne; "for though the guest of the marquis, my visits will be frequent at the vicarage." "And I am sure," eagerly exclaimed Antonia, "gratitude, as well as inclination, will be a never-failing incentive." "You are very kind, my love," answered Mrs.

Moreland; "and when you are tired of gaiety, and wish for an hour of sober converse, come to us, and in our domestic circle you will find the change." "That will soon take place, or I know not Miss Forrester," said Sir Frederic, gazing ardently on her; "the soul which animates that lovely form will shrink from the new set of beings with whom fate dooms it to associate." Antonia smiled at the compliment; while Dauverne, with a sensation not unlike envy, hastily withdrew his eyes. "They are, indeed, a different set of beings," observed Dr. Moreland. "Dreadful is it to see civilized and rational creatures eagerly courting misery, and destroying their health, their peace, their happiness, by voluptuous extravagance, which, like a slow and deadly poison, hourly and obstinately repeated, undermines the constitution, and produces all the wretchedness of premature age."

"Give me domestic bliss," exclaimed Sir Frederic, "and I cut at once the connection; give me——" "The fair quaker," archly interrupted Mrs. Moreland. "No, not the fair quaker," he replied, his cheek flushing scarlet and his eyes directed towards Antonia, "but the woman who possesses every beauty which can adorn the form and mind of an angel, who is seen but to be admired, admired but to be adored." "Ah! is it so, my sensitive nephew?" questioned Mrs. Moreland: "why then, may the infatuation last as long as yourself!" The doctor smiled, Dauverne was silent, and the unconscious object of all sat musing over the late interview with the marquis.

In the morning the marchioness, Ladies Geraldine and Selina, attended by several gentlemen, called at the vicarage; and Antonia, after taking an affectionate leave of the doctor,

been the rage?" "Faith, since its origin," replied Sir Frederic, gravely. "Pretty laconic too," said Glendenning, joining in the general laugh. "But contrarieties are excusable in a man in love." "Like the country!" yawned Lady Geraldine, "heavens, what a bore! why here we only vegetate—positively, Sunderland, if it was not for the pleasure of tormenting," glancing obliquely at Dauverne, "I should absolutely die of *ennui*." "Your ladyship must pardon me," he replied, "but that is a *fort* you can never acquire." "The lovers of the country," said Dauverne, pointedly, "have resources in their own minds; the lovers of town glean them from others." "Nay, I care not from whence they come, or whither they go," resumed Lady Geraldine, "so that they do but kill time and save trouble. What pleasure can possibly be found in climbing mountains, tear-

ing one's feet over briars, rocks, and stones; or losing one's self in dark hideous woods, where one is every instant threatened with suffocation by thick entwining branches, and fancying every rude recess the haunt of robbers?" "Your colouring is too high," said the marchioness. "Prejudice, not reason, dictates," observed Dauverne. "I am decidedly of your ladyship's opinion, though," exclaimed Sunderland. "That gives no weight to the cause," rejoined Dauverne. "How came you to be in Warwickshire, then?" inquired Sir Frederic. "Where the magnet is there do we find the needle," replied Sunderland, bowing to Lady Geraldine.

Antonia listened and beheld—the scenes and the actors were so novel that every sensation was lost in astonishment. There was a freedom, an unblushing confidence in the manners of Lady Geraldine, inimical to her

feelings; a self-conceit, an *hauteur*, an indifference which threatened the peace of Dauverne, and made her shudder as she gazed upon him. Yet there she could trace no discordant passion, no appearance of jealousy; his countenance wore the stamp of melancholy, yet his eyes rested not on Sunderland. "Strange!" thought Antonia, "affianced, yet, apparently, so neglectful: if this is a sample of the great world, would that I were again buried in my convent!" "I see a cloud of dust arise," sang Lady Geraldine, as they paused at the great entrance. "A barouche and four," said the marchioness; "who have we here?" "No doubt a buck of the first water," said Dauverne, smiling, "for he drives like a *maniac*; and, from his dress, he looks like any thing but a—*gentleman*." "It is Carberry!" said Lady Geraldine. "By heavens! 'tis Carberry," vociferated Sunder-

land, and the next moment the carriage stopped, and the earl sprung from the dicky. His eyes rested on Antonia ere yet he had made his obeisance to the marchioness and her daughters; and then, taking his station by her side, in accents of assumed tenderness whispered—" 'Tis an age since I last saw you, Miss Forrester, but though the impression was momentary I feel it is irremediable." Antonia bowed coldly. Sir Frederic, declining the invitation of the marchioness to stay dinner, promised the following day to join their party, and took a reluctant adieu.

After having received a most welcome reception from the marquis, our heroine seated herself by Lady Selina: there was a softness, an ingenuousness, a wish to please in this lovely girl's manner which ever speaks to the heart—which robs even satire of its edge and criticism of its severity—which

claimed the esteem of Antonia almost at first sight, and promised soon to ripen into friendship.

During dinner a visible abstraction possessed the marquis; he joined not in the conversation, but his eyes frequently rested on Antonia with a kind of melancholy earnestness—with an expression which spoke affection, yet which feared to betray its feelings: and when in the evening the gentlemen adjourned to the drawing-room he pleaded indisposition, and retired to his library. “How long has this favoured isle contained such transcendent beauty!” inquired the earl, approaching Antonia with looks of admiration. “My Lord——” said the wondering girl. “Or rather,” he continued, “how long has the divine Miss Forrester been in England?” “About a month,” she replied. “And where, ere that auspicious moment, did this lovely flower flow-

risk?" again questioned his lordship,
 gallantly seizing her hand. "Where
 the voice of flattery could not reach
 her," said the half-offended Antonia,
 endeavouring to withdraw her hand;
 and where, she could have added,
 fashionable folly and fashionable im-
 pertinence were excluded. "Flat-
 tery can never enter your presence,"
 resumed the earl: "tell me candidly,
 lovely Miss Forrester, is it flattery to
 praise the unrivalled brilliancy of the
 sun, the softer tints of Luna, or the
 bright and exquisite colours of the
 rainbow?" "Never sufficiently can
 we adore the wonderful works of our
 Creator," ardently replied Antonia.
 "Then," bowing, "never sufficiently
 can I adore the masterpiece of nature
 —the fair personification of created
 beauty." "Come, come, we shall
 vote you a monopolizer," said Colonel
 Arkerman, looking significantly at the
 earl—"It is not fair for you to infringe

on our rights; you, who have turned Benedict—who, having entered the holy pale of matrimony, are in duty bound to close your eyes against temptation in so fair a form.” “Why, Arkerman,” said the earl, reproachfully, “remind a man of his heaviest, his most bitter misfortune?” “Why heaviest?” inquired the colonel. “Because,” he answered, looking mournfully at Antonia, “’tis irremediable.” “What’s that? matrimony, my Lord?” questioned Lady Geraldine, joining them. “Even so,” gravely replied the earl. “It is a state, with all due deference to the ladies, like a maze; when once a man has got in he struggles in vain, for alas! like Sterne’s poor starling, he can’t get out.” “Don’t believe a word he says, Miss Forrester,” exclaimed her lively ladyship, tapping her on the shoulder; “he has told the same tale to fifty fair maids and then left them to pine at

London next season." "She is certainly pretty," observed Lady Geraldine, looking at her cards; "but she wants confidence more than any one I ever saw; why, if she sees herself noticed she really blushes." "How many cards does your ladyship choose?" inquired Sunderland. "Three; and, as you're just, be merciful." "Pretty!" repeated Carberry, with a contemptuous smile. "How faint is the praise of woman! Say she is an angel; say that her eyes outshine the star of evening—that her teeth are rows of pearls—her lips transparent rubies—her complexion the rose and lily blended—her——" "Stop, my lord," interrupted the marchioness, "you always mount the heroic ladder—ah! the pool is mine.—Well, well, Miss Forrester is certainly handsome, but I see nothing so superlatively exquisite." "By heavens! she is beyond any thing this world can produce," resumed Car-

berry; "and the sculptor, who carves the image of Venus, taking her for a model, would, when his work was completed, blush at seeing the original." "Bravo! bravo!" exclaimed Lady Geraldine. "If we can but prevail on this bewitching Italian to perform the character of Juliet, your lordship, I am sure, will do honour to the love-sick Romeo." "With such a Juliet," exclaimed the earl, "would I were ever Romeo!"—"And the countess, questioned Arkerman.—Carberry threw down a pam-flush and seized the pool.

Lady Selina and Antonia paused not, until they reached the little wicket which opened from the park into the garden of the vicarage. The moon-beams played on their path, and lightened them with her silver rays. The evening was still and calm; no sound was heard, save the plaintive warbling of the nightingale, and the

you are not come unattended?" "Yes, we are," replied Lady Selina. "Dauverne knew not of our ramble; and the rest of the gentlemen were engaged at the card table." "Insensible beings!" exclaimed Sir Frederic. "But you will allow me the honour of escorting you on your return." "You are very kind," said Lady Selina, rising. "Come, Miss Forrester, I am sorry to make so short a visit, but the marchioness, who knows not where we are, may be uneasy at our long absence."

Antonia took a reluctant farewell of Mrs. Moreland and Percival; and, accepting the arm of Sir Frederic, quitted the vicarage. "Lady Carberry, I understand, is so fully engaged with her dying mother, that she declines visiting the Grange," said Sir Frederic, addressing Lady Selina. "So says the earl," replied her ladyship.

“ But a few months ago that plan would not have been sufficient to have absented him from his then adored Cecilia.” “ I am astonished at his conduct,” resumed the baronet: “ the countess is certainly a most lovely, interesting, amiable woman—” “ And tenderly attached to her truant lord,” interrupted Selina. “ I am sure my heart aches for the sufferings of my friend.” “ Philosophy itself cannot account for man’s inconstancy,” remarked Sir Frederic. “ True,” said her ladyship; “ and Cecilia must summon it to her aid, to support her under the agony of a husband’s indifference.” “ Dreadful, dreadful!” articulated Antonia. “ I am sure,” rejoined Lady Selina, “ were you to see her, you would have the same independent of her situation, and the same you—affection—she was a true friend; and she would have been the same.”

infancy, yielded not to time or circumstances. Ah ! never shall I forget the anguish of her bereaved mother, when the valour of British heroes subdued the proud triumphs of united France and Spain :—when in the list of slain, Powersly, the brave defender of his country—the husband, father, friend was numbered. Ever is the glory of victory dimmed by the tears of individuals ! Often does the heart bleed while patriotism rejoices ! Captain Powersly,” and her voice faltered, “ expired in the arms of his son—their blood mingled, for the boy was wounded ; but he was spared to be the comfort of his mother—the protector of his sister. His honour like his father’s is invulnerable ; and he now commands the very frigate, which, under the guidance of a Powersly, has often hauled from superior force the vain badge of defiance.” “ Cruel, inhuman Lord Carberry !” murmured An-

tonia, chasing from her eye the tear of commiseration. "It was at my father's house," pursued Lady Selina, "that the earl first beheld Cecilia—he saw, he admired, he adored, at least he thought so. He knew her history—he knew her fortune small; but affection subdued every barrier, and stamped him her slave. The offer of his hand was made and accepted—not from the wish of grandeur—not from the impulse of ambition: no, it was love—love the most refined, the most tender—love, which had he been a peasant, would have singled him out, and shared his humble destiny. A little more than twelve months ago, Cecilia was married, and is now deserted." Antonia shuddered. "Say not deserted," exclaimed Sir Frederic, "for the countess——" "Not absolutely deserted to be sure," interrupted Lady Selina, "but slighted; hurled from a worshipped idol to a neglected wife.—

I marked the change, but heard not a repining murmur pass her lips.—
 “ She never told her wrongs, but let concealment, like a worm in the bud, prey on her damask cheek.”—Her mother likewise saw it—for who can blind affection? and the very illness under which she labours, proceeds from a heart too closely pressed with sorrow for the disappointed hopes of a beloved daughter.” “ Poor Lady Carberry !” sighed Antonia ; “ poor unhappy Mrs. Powersly ! ’tis indeed a tale which touches the heart. I liked not the appearance of the earl when I first beheld him ; but now I think I shall hate him.”

They had now reached the Grange ; Sir Frederic declined entering, and pausing until he lost sight of them, returned to the vicarage. “ Where have you been ?” inquired Dauverne, meeting them at the drawing-room door. “ To the vicarage,” replied

Antonia. "What alone? not one volunteer to escort you?" No, not one; but we have had a delightful ramble." "If I had known it I would have accompanied you." This unexpected attention filled her heart with momentary pleasure. "We thought," she timidly articulated, "you preferred conversing with the marquis." "Surely you could not think so," reproachfully whispered Dauverne; "surely, my actions could not so far have belied my wishes—Antonia," and he took her hand, while his trembled as he grasped it. "Dare I ask the inducement which led you this night to the vicarage?" "Accident," she replied, as her eyes sank beneath the scrutinizing glance of his. "Accident," he repeated, in a voice of incredulity, "was that all?—not affection?" "Yes, affection." He dropped her hand. "Can you, who know Dr. and Mrs. Moreland, doubt it?" "And did you return

alope to the Grange, Miss Forrester?" "No," said Antonia, boldly, "Sir Frederic Stanley accompanied us." Ah! now the secret's out," vociferated Sunderland, springing from the card-table. "I thought there was more than the parson to be seen at the vicarage."

Antonia cast on him a look in which contempt and disgust were strongly blended; while Lady Selina, in a tone of displeasure, exclaimed—"Mr. Sunderland, we asked not an interpretation of our conduct." "Faith, if your ladyship had," he replied, "I should have been the last person to have given it." And turning to Lady Geraldine, continued in a half whisper—" 'Tis a tender point I perceive, Lady Selina waxes warm—" "Not in defence of Sir Frederic Stanley's attention," interrupted Selina, "but at Mr. Sunderland's impertinence."

“Bravo!” exclaimed Lord Carberry.
 “Come, Sunderland, what say you to this?” “Say,” repeated the beau, with an affected yawn, “that I am struck dumb by Lady Selina’s condescension.” “Would I possessed such a champion as Stanley!” whispered Captain Glendenning. “And such a declaimer as Mr. Sunderland?” questioned Lady Selina. “To possess the one,” rejoined Glendenning, “I would compromise for the other.” “Who is this divine, this Dr. Moreland?” inquired Colonel Arkerman. “A man,” eagerly exclaimed Antonia, “who, to be known is to be revered—” and then paused, and blushed at her own encomium. Dauverne gazed on her radiant countenance, with an ardour, an admiration not to be controlled—he traced the struggles of modest diffidence, and grateful praise—he longed to speak his feelings, but honour, that

fatal bar to his happiness, interposed— he turned mournfully away, folded his arms, and remained silent. “He is a mighty good sort of a man, truly,” said Lady Geraldine, with a satirical smile; “but I hate such humdrum characters.”—“If to fulfil every social duty; to rear a family in virtue; to pass through life without injuring, molesting, or offending a fellow creature, can be styled a negative character, Dr. Moreland certainly answers to the description,” said Dauverne. “Bless me!” resumed her ladyship, “I thought you had determined to be seen and not heard.” “Perhaps, upon this subject Lady Geraldine,” replied Dauverne, “if you was to pursue that maxim, it would be better,” “*Allons to the music-room,*” said the mortified Lady Geraldine, attempting to hide her chagrine under a forced laugh; “and perhaps Mr.

Dauverne will touch the organ, to the tune of the Hundred and Fourth Psalm."

Dauverne replied not; the marchioness laughed at her daughter's wit, and the controversy ended.

CHAP. II.

"MISS FORRESTER," said the Marquis, following her the next morning from the breakfast-room, "may I, for half an hour, claim your serious attention?" "Certainly, my Lord," replied Antonia, wondering at the import. "In my study, then," he continued, leading her forward, "we shall meet with no interruption."

She felt his hand tremble as he conducted her to a seat: she saw the varying tints of his countenance, from the high flush of scarlet fade to the ghastly hue of death. He threw himself by her side; his hand pressed upon his heart, and his eyes fixed upon her. Terrified at his situation, she sprung towards the bell; but, guessing her intention, the marquis

grasped her robe, and pointed to the sofa. Again she took her seat, and in eager trepidation awaited the solution. "Just so did she look," murmured the marquis, in a voice low and broken; "just so did she smile—the mouth—the nose—the eyes—the self-same image. Sweet shade! thou hast vengeance—ample vengeance. All-seeing heaven, who suffered the bruised reed to fall by the hand of treachery—who, in an angel's form, pictured virtue, and laid her mourning in the dust, look down on this her representative! and——ah! what have I uttered?"

He started. "I rave, Madam—Miss Forrester—Antonia——" His voice faltered; his head sank upon the arm of the sofa; and the swollen tear, wrung by the pangs of memory from the heart of anguish, rolled down his cheek. "My Lord," implored the wondering Antonia, "suffer me to call your attendants; another time will suf-

face for explanation : you are ill, and exertion agitates you." " No, no," repeated the marquis, quickly, " I am well—quite well : this is a mere nothing—quite well, Miss Forrester. But to speak of friends whom death has removed from the world," he solemnly continued—" friends, dear, beloved, intimately connected---to speak of such with composure, requires not fortitude, but apathy."

Antonia's eyes, in scrutinizing earnestness, rested on him. " I requested the present conference," he resumed. " to renew my offers of friendship and protection ; to assure you, Miss Forrester, that my home, my family, shall be your home, your family, until such time as your heart may wish to exchange it for a more permanent establishment—until the being, who can justly estimate its virtues, shall have ensured its affection, and successfully

have solicited the hand of my adopted daughter."

Antonia, sighing, still attentively gazed on the marquis. "Yet think not," he pursued, "that dependence is your lot. At the death of your saint-like mother, five thousand pounds was invested in my hands, as the portion of her orphan. That sum, from accumulating interest, is doubled: ten thousand, therefore, is your own--the interest--the principal, all at your disposal."

Antonia exulted not in her new-acquired possession. The whole would she have willingly exchanged for a knowledge of her origin. Disappointment shadowed her expressive features, and, in a voice indicating her feelings--
 "My parents!" she exclaimed;
 "wherefore this mystery? You knew my mother--ah! you start, you tremble! Hide not her sufferings from

me : 'tis mistaken mercy---she was injured---a villain betrayed her peace---" " Who told the tale ?" interrupted the marquis, as a convulsive shudder stole over him. " Sister Benedicta," replied Antonia, " who was the bosom friend of my mother : she bid me be aware of man : she told me the viper's sting was not more deadly than ingratitude. Look up, my Lord ; why should you droop ? You also were her friend---you injured not my mother ! Sister Benedicta told me to bless the marquis of Allingthorn ; because, when suffering, dying, he comforted my heart-broken parent, took charge of her little, deserted, wretched child, and placed it in a sanctuary. But 'tis strange," pausing, " neither the abbess, or sister Benedicta, ever mentioned my father. Perhaps you knew him, my Lord : was he *too* unfortunate ? was he *too* injured ? did he *too* die of a broken heart ?" " He in-

jured ! great God !” articulated the marquis, burying his face in his hands. “ Torture me not ; ask not such questions : be content to know, that he too suffered——” “ And the villain,” rejoined Antonia, “ who betrayed their peace ; did he triumph in his iniquity ? does he live ? Oh ! if he does, point him out, that I may shun him—fly him ; yet, in my prayers, supplicate his peace and pardon.” “ Forgiving, injured girl !” murmured the marquis, affectionately squeezing her hand ; “ the soul as the body similar. But spare me, Antonia,” he continued, in a firmer voice : “ from this moment let the subject drop. The time may come, when, through me, you may learn the fate of your parents ; but, at this period, my health, my spirits, nay circumstances forbid the disclosure. Retire ; and let not the marchioness, let not my daughters, trace on your brow a source for conjecture.”

Antonia, mournfully bowing, withdrew her hand, and hastened to her own apartment. In gaiety and the different pursuits of pleasure, time passed rapidly away; and Antonia had already been a week an inmate of the Grange. Her intimacy with Lady Selina increased with each succeeding interview: the marchioness treated her with distinguished politeness; Lady Geraldine, with condescending vivacity; and the marquis, with the most affectionate attention.

Dauverne persisted in his assumed reserve; Carberry, in pouring forth the incense of adulation; Sunderland, in insinuating himself into the good graces of Lady Geraldine; Glendenning, in whispering lovers' soft speeches into the ear of Lady Selina; and Arkerman, at the request of the marchioness, planning a *fête champêtre*, to be given on the following Thursday to the neighbouring gentry. Sir Fre-

deric was nominally the guest of Dr Moreland, for the chief of his hours were passed in the society of Antonia. More than ever was he resolved on matrimony; and Dauverne, the confidant of all his schemes, was entrusted with the important secret.

The morning, destined for the rural gala, brought with it disappointment. A heavy rain densed the atmosphere, and the surcharged clouds looked dark and threatening. The marchioness was disconcerted; Lady Geraldine pouted; Lady Selina, unruffled, gazed from the window; and Antonia smiled at the defeated project.

"Was ever any thing so provoking?" exclaimed Lady Geraldine, breaking the sticks of a fine ivory fan, and scattering them on the carpet. "I vow, I would have given a thousand pounds to have ensured twelve hours sun." "The sun is not to be bribed," observed Dauverne; "but

this is an opportunity of showing your philosophy, my fair cousin: come, exert your fortitude under this *weighty* affliction." "'Tis absolutely a *misery* of human life, and not the most inconsiderable of the catalogue," said Sunderland, stretching his well-formed limbs on an elegant Ottoman couch. "A *misery*!" repeated Lady Selina, ironically; "well, I always learn something when in the company of Mr. Sunderland." "By my sagacity," resumed Sunderland, regardless of the insinuation, "I would have betted last night twenty to one in favour of a fine day. The old women were out for once in their adage, for the horns of the moon were up: wer'n't they, Miss Forrester, when you looked so anxiously towards the vicarage?"

Antonia's reply was a look of contempt. "Indeed, Mr. Sunderland," gravely rejoined Lady Selina, perusing in her speaking countenance the senti-

ments of her friend, "I never hear your *jeu d'esprits* without thinking of Hudibras." "You are too complimentary, dear Lady Selina," replied the gratified beau: "do spare my blushes. The duchess of Delaware has often called me Narcissus; but to be compared to that most witty of all witty beings, Hudibras, is too flattering." "Nay, you mistake me," resumed her ladyship, endeavouring to stifle a smile: "I mean not to—but an extract from Hudibras:

"His wits were sent him for a token,
But in the carriage crack'd and broken."

"Bless me, Selina!" said Lady Geraldine, "you are grown an absolute cynic. We must be careful of what we do, or all our actions will be transmuted into doggerel rhyme." "If conceit and folly swell the measure," observed Dauvergie, "methinks it will extend beyond Mr. Sunderland."—"Avaunt, with this war of wit!" said

the marchioness, laughing, "and remember, though the weather forbids our *fête* in the park, it interferes not with to-night; for, positively, Dauverne and Geraldine open the ball?" "And," said Sir Frederic, who at the instant made his *entree*, and hastened to Antonia, "may I successfully solicit the happiness of Miss Forrester for a partner?"

Antonia bowed; Dauverne envied his friend; and Lady Selina, precipitately quitted the room. At ten the guests began to assemble. The whole suite of apartments, for the reception of the company, were tastefully decorated, and bore an appearance so novel in the eyes of Antonia, that, as she gazed upon the splendidly-dressed visitants, the coloured lamps, the magnificent chandeliers—the scattered profusion of artificial flowers, and the rich vases, exhaling the most delightful perfumes—she almost fancied her-

self transported to those regions of pleasure, so ably described in the Arabian tales.

"Yon tall, thin spinster, respectable in age, and glittering with the blase of diamonds," whispered Lady Geraldine to Antonia, and directing her attention to a lady on the opposite side of the room, "is a staunch supporter of the *pit-hic* theatre: she is the Calista, the Monimia, the Juliet of the present day: at least, so she tells me; for I confess it requires some force of imagination to conceive her in the representation. By the bye, I believe, I half offended her last winter; for when she had concluded *puffing* her praise, I gravely hinted she would have been more at home in the character of Murphy's *Old Maid*. And that demure, grave quizz, at her side, is the Baroness Lofty; whose daughter's degenerating taste, a few months back, took a *penchant* for the footman, and

grafted a new scion on the lordly trunk. And yon poor meek, sighing, dying girl, in the corner, has lost her love: de'el tak' the wars that tore my Willy from me," continued her ladyship, laughing. "A smart captain obtained her heart; and then, thief-life, ran away with the precious treasure, to serve his king, his country, and *himself*, on the rich soil of Buenos Ayres*. Poor thing! he has left her to lament at leisure; and if it is long before prosperous breezes waft him home, instead of his mistress, he will find a weeping willow. And the large moving turtle, now bowing to Selina, in the velvet and gold suit, is descended from the *honourable* profession of a porter; and now, thanks to the coast of Guinea, and the rich widow of a Liverpool merchant, possesses the title

* At the period this was written, Buenos Ayres was in the possession of the English.

of knighthood ; drives his coach-and-six, and sets up for a gentleman. And that pretty, lisping dame of quality, in the azure robe, studded externally to represent heaven with silver stars, was married to a handsome baronet, intrigued with an ugly lord—got a divorce—persuaded her noble inamorato to make her, in modern estimation, virtuous ; and they are now actually so jealous of each other, that the naughty, censorious world affirms they live like——like——like what ! Spirit of genius, aid me with a simile ! Like a spoiled brat and a kitten ; loving each other ; fearing each other ; teasing each other ; tormenting each other ; and——there, look at that most magnanimous Amazon, now making her debut ; five feet eight inches high, out-topping every lesser deity, and waving in most awful majesty, yon tiara of coquelicot feathers. She was, oh monstrous ! a tradesman's daughter,

captivated the degenerated taste of an English peer; and after giving *all* that he could possibly ask, impressed him so strongly with the beneficence of her charity that one silly day he made her a lady, at least in the appliance of terms, for heaven knows," folding her arms affectedly, "'tis hard to surmount *old habits*. And now, my pretty little signiora, take care how you behave, for on yon brocaded couch is stretched what I call the *critique* of fashion, for she is one of those favourites of Apollo who cuts a slice of every body to hash up in a new dish denominated a *novel*. And—" "Who next?" interrupted Lord Carberry, who had stood an unsuspected listener. "Powers of mystery!" ejaculated Lady Geraldine, "how came this? I have described all the oddities and overlooked the Earl of Carberry." "Ladies are privileged," said the earl, bowing; "only pray, all charm-

ing Geraldine, give me a passport to the esteem of your fascinating friend."

"Let me see," resumed her ladyship, placing her finger to her forehead in an attitude of meditation; "the Earl of Carberry, like the inconstant bee, tired of the possession of the rose, has left his sting in her bosom, and seeks to rifle sweets from every flower which decks the gay *parterre*. Are you satisfied? is that a just picture, my Lord?" "Oh, perfectly!" hiding his chagrin beneath a forced laugh. "You have made me harmless, therefore Miss Forrester need not fear me, for my sting, you know, is disposed of." "It's not clear to me, though, that the venom expires in the infliction of the wound," archly rejoined Lady Geraldine: "I should be loath to play with the wasp who had stung my neighbour. But hark! the groom of the chambers announces a new arrival. Ah, my dear, dear friend the Duchess of Dela-

ware! escorted by Lord Westbrook too! come along Antonia," taking her arm and hurrying her forward, "for, positively, I must introduce you. Ye gods, what havoc doth ambition make!" she continued, in a low voice, as she led her up the room. "Laura was dying for Westbrook when old Delaware offered to make her his duchess; and now that the duke is laid up with the gout 'tis convenient to choose him for a cicisbeo.—Ah, my sweet friend! how are you? I have been the whole of the day anticipating the pleasure of seeing your grace. Allow me to introduce Miss Forrester: this is the lovely novice you have so often heard of—" "Not in the art of charming," exclaimed Westbrook, gallantly bowing. Antonia blushed, while her grace condescendingly smiled her notice.

At the moment Sir Frederic sought his partner, Lord Carberry, with a

defected air, approached. "Am I so unfortunate as to be the second in my application?" he said. "I am so happy as to be the first," replied Sir Frederic, taking the hand of Antonia and leading her to the set. "Stop, stop, my triumphant rival," exclaimed the earl, following them. "Miss Forrester, in the first change may I be more successful in my endeavours?" Antonia bowed assent. "And the second," petitioned the baronet, in a low imploring voice, "may I again possess the blessing?" The music had already commenced, but he still retained her hand—still were his eyes rivetted in silent admiration on her face, as she smilingly acceded to his proposal. It was not in nature to behold this with unconcern; Dauverne forgot the figure; instead of going down the dance he began hands across, and when he should have cast off he attempted right and left. "For hea-

ven's, sake ! what are you at ?" exclaimed Lady Geraldine, her patience quite exhausted. " Defend me from a supine dancer ! Why, I would rather have an automaton for my partner, for then, at any rate, I could do as I pleased." Dauverne apologized, forced a laugh at his own awkwardness, and promised amendment : but no sooner had he reached the bottom of the set, than, pleading a violent cramp, he liberated his dissatisfied partner, and hastened to a seat. " Sunderland," said Lady Geraldine, addressing the self-satisfied beau, who, under the pretence of viewing the dancers, was reflecting his well proportioned form in an opposite mirror, " will you take compassion on a deserted damsel ?" " Excuse me, lovely petitioner, but until I can claim the ecstatic blessing of your fair hand I cannot dance." " Supposing I were that maid forsaken," resumed her

ladyship, "what then——" "Impossible!" interrupted Sunderland, summoning a well deceptive smile of rapture into his countenance. "Impossible that there can exist a being so indifferent, so blind, so senseless, so vapid.—What! desert Lady Geraldine? that heaven of sweets, of wit, of beauty! No, no, I cannot believe it; excuse me, fair creature, but I cannot possibly possess so poor an opinion of man's discernment." "Indeed, 'tis even so," replied her ladyship. "The cramp, or something else, has robbed me of my partner, for see," glancing obliquely at Dauverne, "his head rests on his hand, and he looks as woe-begone as if he was in love." "Can you decypher that delightful passion?" questioned Sunderland, tenderly pressing her hand. "Oh yes! I am a famous diviner." "Look then in my eyes," languished forth *Narcissus*;

“and tell me whose image they reflect?” “Your own.” “Pshaw! now you are witty, captivating Geraldine; but if it gives you pleasure I care not, though it be at my expence. Would that Dauverne loved you as much as I do!” he continued, sighing: “would that Dauverne, like me, saw perfection in no other being!” “What would you imply?” questioned Lady Geraldine. “Oh, nothing, nothing!” answered Sunderland; “for worlds would I not wound your susceptible feelings.” “Nay, don’t fear,” interrupted her ladyship, laughing: “it is not in your power; for I am as indifferent to Mr. Dauverne as Mr. Dauverne can possibly be to me.” “Why then,” rejoined Sunderland, “’tis clear to every eye that Dauverne appreciates not the blessing destined for him; else, would he have no opinion but your’s; no

wish, no thought unconnected with your happiness—you, beautiful Geraldine,

“ The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
“ The observ’d of all observers.”

To marry a being so self willed, so domineering ; why, before he has been a month a husband he will be a perfect lord paramount. Think well, angelic girl, ere you perpetrate the sacrifice.”

“ Nay, what can I do ?” said Lady Geraldine, gravely. “ Heigh ho ! there’s no alternative.” “ Yes, there is one,” whispered Sunderland : “ but see, we are called—another time I’ll name it.” “ What is the matter ?” inquired Antonia, approaching Lady Selina ; “ you have not danced with your usual spirit to-night.” “ I was just making the same observation,” said Captain Glendenning. “ Do exert yourself, my sweet partner, or really it may cast a reflection on my

gallantry." "You are both fanciful," replied the lovely girl, forcing a smile, "for my spirits, I am sure, are at their usual height." "May I, at any rate, implore you to exert them for the two next dances?" said Sir Frederic; "for, if it is not too presumptuous, I hope to have the honour of your hand." Selina's eyes sparkled with new created pleasure as she smiled assent. "And shall we too make an exchange, Miss Forrester?" asked Glendenning, seating himself next to Antonia. "You are too late, my hero," exclaimed Lord Carberry, who at the moment came to claim his partner: "not to possess your estate would I relinquish the next hour's felicity."

He turned to address Antonia, but she was gone: already had she reached the sofa on which Dauverne had thrown himself, and in a voice soft and low inquired whether he was ill? and why he declined dancing? Pleased

with her attention, and the animated expression of her countenance, he took her passive hand. "And did Miss Forrester miss me from the set?" he said: "did she for a moment think of the self-exiled Dauverne? — Who would not, like me, endure banishment to be recalled to gaiety by such a messenger?" "Indeed I feared you were ill," replied Antonia, faintly—"that is—I was apprehensive—" "Ever kind, ever tender, ever considerate!" interrupted Dauverne, respectfully pressing her hand. "Oh, was Lady Geraldine but a second Miss Forrester how different would be my sensations!" Antonia's eyes were fixed on him; her hand trembled; her bosom heaved—"Like me!" she repeated, "Lady Geraldine like me!"—She paused, and recollecting herself would have withdrawn her hand, but still Dauverne detained it. "Why were you made so excellent?" he murmured—"why

every moment in you do I behold a brighter example of virtue? Oh, Antonia!—" "Think not to fly me, my charming partner," said Lord Carberry, approaching, "for by heaven! if it is to the world's end I will pursue you." "And do you call me to gaiety and then forsake me?" reproachfully whispered Dauverne, relinquishing her hand. "I had hoped you would have taken compassion on the *supine dancer*." "I am sorry—it is very unfortunate—" articulated Antonia, in a low voice, "but Lord Carberry—" "The next two then," interrupted Dauverne. "Sir Frederic Stanley," again murmured the disappointed girl. "Happy Stanley!" sighed Dauverne, as Carberry led her to her station.—Suddenly she turned, and again approaching him, as a soft blush mantled her face and bosom, articulated, "The two succeeding I am at liberty." "And then, said

Dauverne, eagerly, and his countenance beamed with delight, "I will claim my partner, and—" "Dance away the *cramp*," ironically observed Lady Geraldine, who, like an evil genius, seemed to pursue him. "Say rather," rejoined Dauverne, "and sue the compassion of Miss Forrester, to accept as a partner a man whose rapidity has put to flight even the persevering spirit of Lady Geraldine." "'Pon my honour," resumed her ladyship, laughing, "Miss Forrester must possess more than double my patience, if she undertakes the charge of so heedless a being." "I was ever famed for *patience*," lisped the Duchess of Delaware, joining them at the moment, and languidly turning her lovely eyes on Dauverne. "By heaven! a fair challenge," exclaimed Carberry. "Your grace's condescension is enough to implant in the breasts of thousands the dangerous seeds of envy." The

duchess smiled, Dauverne bowed.
 "Though for myself," continued the earl, again leading Antonia to the dance, "not the voluptuous queen of Egypt, when dissolving costly pearls, could tempt me, even in thought, to exchange my incomparable partner, for

"She alone

Possesses every thought,

Fills every sense, and pants in every vein."

"Her grace of Delaware will soon be tired of her partner," remarked Carberry, on reaching the bottom of the set: "for Dauverne sails on in the same negative style. I question whether he is not seized with another fit of the *cramp*, for he looks, if I may use the expression, as though he were dancing without a soul." The rose on Antonia's cheek heightened its tints, for the earl softly pursued—"If, when the envied partner of Miss Forester, the same languor should pre-

vail, I shall eternally vote him as dead to sense as he appears to be to exertion.”—“ Is it as I hinted, or is it not ?” questioned Sunderland, whispering in the ear of Lady Geraldine. “ Did you ever behold such a change ? ’pon my soul ’tis too palpable !” For Dauverne, now figuring down the dance with Antonia, was indeed an altered being. He looked the very image of grace, animation, and gaiety ; while Antonia, beholding no other than her partner, like the sylphid fairy, tripped

“ On the light fantastic toe.”

“ The *cramp* has vanished,” sarcastically exclaimed Lady Geraldine, sufficiently loud to reach the ear of Dauverne : he turned on her a silent glance of disapprobation, and with the unvarying smile of pleasure regained the hand of his lovely partner “ I protest Miss Forrester is determined to

show us that Italy at least is famous for dancing," continued her ladyship. "And Geraldine in her turn," said Lady Selina, "would, was the fair foreigner to judge of a nation by an individual, compel her to acknowledge England *famous for good nature and liberality.*" "Italy is *famous for painting* too," remarked Sir Frederic, archly glancing at Lady Geraldine. "'Tis universally allowed to be the nativity of the fine arts," said Captain Glendenning. "And, I am sure," interrupted Lord Carberry, "in Miss Forrester we may affirm it has given birth to one of the graces." Lady Geraldine smiled contemptuously, and addressing Sunderland in a low whisper languidly took his arm and walked to a seat.

It was late, or, rather, early before the company quitted the Grange. Night's vapours had rolled before the face of day: already had the peasant

repaired to his daily labour—already had the shepherd led forth his flock
 care. The sun's brilliant rays piercing
 through the windows and flaming the
 hearts of the launce, was the sign for
 these warriors in the signs of peace
 to depart, and soon a new scene for
 the image of peace.

CHAP. III.

“ STANLEY, what say you,” exclaimed Carberry, “ will you be of the party? On Monday I take wing for Belfont, to dine at the *barouche club*, of which I have the honour of being a member.” “ Not I,” replied Sir Frederic, “ though I were to possess all the barouches there assembled.” “ Faith, it would be worth the sacrifice of a few hours,” remarked Sunderland; “ for last meeting I was there with Westbrook, and we mustered a round dozen: got damned drunk, lords and commoners, and spun to town as though the wind had been our horses and Æolus the charioteer. Come, come, throw off this silly *penchant*, love becomes not a man of spirit,

and matrimony's the grave of freedom.”

“ Talk not of matrimony,” said the earl ; “ for heaven’s sake hold not to my view the badge of bondage ! I have burnt my fingers in the flame, and would needs have man take warning by my fate.” “ You are no rule to judge by, Carberry,” said Sir Frederick ; “ so changeable, so fickle, never two hours in the same mind.” “ And you are so *constant*,” retorted Sunderland, laughing ; “ witness my guardian’s daughter—have you quite forgot the interesting Mahala ? Come, I prophesy, that Miss Forrester gives place to the beautiful Duchess of Delaware.”

“ A married woman,” said Stanley, fiercely. “ Mr. Sunderland, do you mean to insult me ? ” “ Not I truly,” he replied, yawning : “ ’pon my soul you are the only man I know who would take it as an insult. I should think it glory to kick up such a breeze—summoned to Doctor’s Common—

witnesses examined—letters read—divorce petitioned — obtained — and— and—” “ Damages paid,” interrupted Carberry. “ Faith, that must be in person then,” resumed the beau. “ Notoriety ensured, if you please, and Tom Sunderland’s name immortalized. Oh! it would be glorious, glorious, the very pinnacle of my ambition.” “ If that’s your ambition,” said Sir Frederic, “ the foundation’s as flimsy as the hope’s infamous.” “ I don’t know that, either,” replied Sunderland, arranging his neckcloth, and strutting conceitedly across the room: “ far worse figures have obtained the day before now—who’s afraid! Fame whispers the Duchess of Delaware wants not discernment.” “ Miss Forrester has no fortune,” gravely observed the Earl, turning to Sir Frederic. “ Yes, faith, she has more than I have,” replied the baronet; “ for her fortune lies in virtue and

beauty, mine in trumpery gold and dirty acres." "Surely you will not marry her?" questioned his lordship. "By heaven's! I will," said Stanley; "and shoot the man who, even in thought, meditates her injury." "The devil you will," exclaimed Carberry, forcing a laugh; "you are warm in the cause."

The sabbath bells were chiming as Lady Selina and Antonia, already equipped for church, entered the breakfast room. Lady Geraldine, in a morning dress, was negligently lolling on a sofa: Sunderland by her side, one moment sipping his chocolate, the next coming the paper. "Ah, Harry Bravenger! I give you joy, my boy!" he exclaimed, starting from his seat. "Hear! — hear! Lady Geraldine — "Died on Thursday evening, at his house in Sackville-street, John Hugh Ravenscroft, Esq. We understand he has left as heir to his immense wealth

the honourable Henry Bravenger, brother to Viscount Westbrook." "Bless me! what a dutiful nephew," remarked Lady Geraldine; "why Westbrook was actually, at the very time, *dancing*, not *singing*, a dirge to the obsequies of his uncle. Do, when you return on Wednesday," addressing Lord Carberry, "give Bravenger a seat in the barouche: I should like to see how he bears his good fortune." "You forget, Lady Geraldine," said Dauverne, "that decency must be observed when affection is out of the case: the nephew will scarcely leave London ere the uncle is interred." "True, true, I had forgotten," replied her ladyship. "Let me see, what day is this? for time, of all things, is what I least notice." "This is the holiday of labour," answered Dauverne, with seriousness—"the rest of peace—the day in which religion exercises her mild influence and claims the just homage

of ungrateful man—accompany us, and Dr. Moreland will tell you more.”

Carberry whistled; Sunderland smiled; while Lady Geraldine, as though she had forgotten what had been said, turned to her sister and Antonia, and with a look of surprise, exclaimed, “Why, where in the name of wonder are you going at this early hour?” “To church,” replied Lady Selina; “suppose you add to the party.” “I attend church in the country!” repeated Lady Geraldine, with an affected scream. “Lord! child, ’tis quite a bore! At St. James’s it is *bareable*, for fashion takes us to hear Mr. A——: but to kill two whole hours with yawning, staring at empty benches, and listening to dull morality; patience defend me! ’tis worse than to be outdone by one’s acquaintance; out quizzed by the quizzers; or, to find elbow room in Bond-street—

'tis the most insufferable of all insufferable things."

Dauverne, Lady Selina, Antonia, Glendenning, and Lord Carberry, who for reasons best known to himself, had volunteered the service, in defiance of the satirical smiles of Lady Geraldine and Sunderland, quitted the Grange, and at the conclusion of that *necessary duty*, public worship, returned with Dr. and Mrs. Moreland to the vicarage. Mrs. Moreland, Sir Frederic Stanley, and the children, accompanied them to the park gate, nor parted until she had gained the promise of Lady Selina and Antonia, to pass the following day at the vicarage. In the evening, Antonia reflecting on the inexplicable conduct of Lady Geraldine, stole unperceived into the shrubbery. Her inexperience was astonished; her fancy engaged by her representation of the great world: its manners and morals, though with fascinating vivacity related in various

anecdotes, surprised and shocked her feelings:—far excluded in the deep gloom of a monastery from the busy scenes of human wretchedness, how could she possibly allow for the strong influence which *habit* attains over the mind, invariably reconciling it to *situations* and *circumstances*, with rectitude's unperverted sense, utterly incompatible? “Ah never, never,” she exclaimed, in the ardour of her soul, “can I acquire a taste for that fashionable, wicked, unhallowed world, whose dissipation, and whose profligacy, excite only my contempt and detestation!” Lost in thought, she entered a kind of hermitage, sequestered from the noon-day sun by the spreading verdure of an oak, whose jutting branches extended over it, and mingling with the ash and sycamore on the opposite side, formed a complete bower. A shallow stream, breaking from a ridged bank, forced a passage through

the loose fragments scattered by its fall, and disappeared, with a kind of hollow murmuring sound, among the underwood. Antonia paused; she thought she heard a sigh—a sensation like fear stole over her, yet, ashamed to acknowledge it, even to herself, she resolved to examine the interior of the hermitage; and had already gained the threshold, when she distinctly heard the following words—“Alas! what remedy can be opposed to a breaking heart? what panacea can heal a wounded spirit?”

It was too late to retreat; her step had betrayed her, for the marquis pronounced her name. “Pardon this intrusion, my lord,” she exclaimed; “and do me the justice to believe it was by mere accident that I encroached on your retirement.” “Come hither, Antonia,” he replied, “talk not of intrusion—’twas of you I was thinking—’twas to you I addressed my-

self: for look," extending a miniature towards her, "is not this your own image?" She started—the picture trembled in her hand—it was indeed her own image, habited in the plain vestments of a novice—the azure eyes raised to heaven, and the sacred cross uplifted in her hand. The crystal was still dim with the tears which had been shed over it. Antonia gazed on it, as on the relic of a departed saint; she pressed it to her lips—to her heart. "My mother!" she articulated, as in a burst of anguish she sunk on her knees before the marquis. "Oh, my lord! if you have mercy, if you have pity, hide no longer the secret from me. Tell me the wound which lacerated her bosom?—tell me the being who broke her heart?" "Who told you her heart was broken?" questioned the marquis, snatching the portrait from the almost paralysed hand of Antonia. "Silly girl! they could

not say I did it; why do you kneel to me?" There was a wildness in his manner, a frenzied vacant stare which terrified her. "Turn not from me, my lord," she implored; "oh give me that picture! 'tis the daughter of that murdered saint—the child you snatched from misery, who kneeling sues—who humbly supplicates for the portrait of her mother."

The marquis stood irresolute: his eyes wandered from the miniature to the recumbent figure of Antonia—suddenly he stooped—he threw the black ribbon by which it was suspended around her neck—he folded her in his arms—he kissed each burning cheek—he kissed her polished forehead. "My Antonia!" he resumed, as he pressed her with frantic wildness to his heart; "my tender, loved Antonia!" He started; he sprang from her; and striking his hand against his forehead, rushed from the hermitage.

Surprised, distressed, offended; unknowing what to think, or how to act—unknowing whether to pity, or whether to condemn, Antonia remained stupified, nay, almost motionless: suddenly she remembered the precious treasure she had acquired; and as she hid it in her bosom, tears came to her assistance, and relieved the bursting anguish of her heart. “Pardon me, Miss Forrester,” said the marquis, re-entering the hermitage—“pardon the incoherent expressions of a man, who has dared, in violation of his judgment, to betray feelings which he meant ever to conceal!” “My lord!” said Antonia, turning proudly towards him. “You mistake me, Miss Forrester,” he continued, reading distrust in her countenance: “true, it is love; but not that love which would injure its object—it is affection; it is regard; it is friendship; founded on a basis you have yet to learn.” Still was she

silent. The marquis paused for an answer, and then proceeded: "Doubt not my honour; sooner would I die—sooner would I sheath a dagger in the breast of innocence, than breathe a wish which angels might not ratify! There is a being, Antonia." he pursued, in a low emphatic voice; and he grasped her hand and raised his eyes to heaven, "who now, though invisible, hears me—who now, though invisible, sees me—who bid me in a last lingering sigh, be careful of her babe; and love her with a parent's fondness. That being can read my heart—that being can witness the truth of my assertion!"

Antonia sobbed; doubt vanished at this solemn assurance; and anxiously she gazed upon him: "Do you pardon me, Miss Forrester?" inquired the marquis. "Do you yield implicit credit to my declaration?" "I do, my lord," she replied; "heaven knows

I do !” “ And will you promise, most sacredly promise,” resumed the marquis, still grasping her hand, “ never to disclose the agitation I have unguardedly betrayed ? never to acknowledge to the world, that I was the doner of that picture !” “ All, all, I promise,” answered Antonia, as the marquis led her to the door of the hermitage—“ secrecy, eternal silence ; and for your proffered love, receive, my lord, the return of gratitude.”

The marquis replied not—he pressed her hand as he parted from her—he watched her retreating figure as it lessened in distance—and when the trees obscured it from his view, he plunged again into the deepening shade, to reflect and to meditate. “ Alone, and so thoughtful,” exclaimed Dauverne, meeting her in the shrubbery : “ are not these solitary rambles unsalutary, Miss Forrester ?” gazing on her cheek, still moist with the truant

Allingthorn, for the *exercise* of her industry, always chuses Sunday. But where has Selina hid herself? I thought her discernment, would ever have wedded her to the society of Miss Forrester." " I left her writing to her friend, the Countess of Carberry," replied Antonia. " Then, indeed, is she well occupied," said Dauverne. " The Countess of Carberry is a being of a superior order ; lovely, fascinating, engaging ; and who fulfils the painful arduous station of a neglected wife, with dignity to herself, and honour to her feelings. Unvitiated by the example of her lord, or by the influence of fashion, she lives, alas ! a mournful witness, that wedded youth, innocence and beauty, are often *slighted* and *exchanged* for age, profligacy, and deception. Possibly you may see her when at St. Antholine's ; for she is now at a small estate near Falmouth,

for the benefit of her mother, whose declining health claims all a daughter's tenderness." "From Lady Selina, I have heard her sad story," said Antonia; "and as I pity the oppressed, despise the oppressor." "Her brother, Captain Powersly, who is now on a cruize," resumed Dauverne, "is as fine a fellow as ever graced the naval uniform: humanity, the concomitant of bravery, marks his every action; and in the victor, the lordly *lion* slumbers in the *lamb*. He adores his sister; and was it not in pity to her tenderness, Carberry would know and feel the force of his resentment."

Scarce had he concluded the sentence when Lady Selina, the earl, and Captain Glendenning, appeared. "We have been searching all over the grounds for you, Miss Forrester," said Lord Carberry: "what have we committed to merit so severe a penance as the exclusion from your society?"

"If you could guess the tenor of our discourse," said Dauverne, in answer to his question, "you would cease to regret your absence." "Impossible!" exclaimed the earl, gazing on Antonia; "with angels, though conscious of our frailty, will ambitious man ever wish to associate." "Supposing our study had been on the human heart," said Dauverne. "Well," replied Carberry, "could not I have joined in the hypothesis?" "Supposing it had been on the inconstancy of man," resumed Dauverne, "would *that* have suited Lord Carberry?" "And from whence do *you* claim the privilege of questioning?" inquired the earl, with a satirical smile. "If you were in the court of Spain, upon my soul they would nominate you an inquisitor!" "By what contrivance has your lordship escaped the power of Geraldine?" inquired Selina. "By the best in the world," replied Car-

berry: "by having our thoughts diametrically opposite from the game: by playing clubs when hearts were called for, and diamonds instead of spades: by yawning and abstraction: by completely tiring the patience of the ladies, and then recommending the sober steady game of whist. In short, the marchioness and Arkerman, Lady Geraldine and Sunderland, are now battling for the trick, and disputing the four by honours." "What a strange set of people!" mentally ejaculated Antonia. "I do believe, if it was not for the emotion which high bets, and high gaming produce, their hearts would forget to beat." "Do you really leave Warwickshire to-morrow, my lord?" inquired Glendenning. "Stern necessity compels me," he replied; "for Westbrook has tied me down in a confounded bet, to the forfeiture of five hundred if I am absent." "And when shall we see you

again?" "Oh! on Wednesday or Thursday to a certainty. I could not exist," lowering his voice to a whisper, and addressing Antonia, "in the prospect of a longer banishment: for even when surrounded by conviviality, I shall picture the Grange, and feel as did our first parents when expelled Paradise."

An emotion of wounded pride, of offended dignity, called the mantling blush, into the cheeks of Antonia—Carberry saw it, and exulted—Dauverne saw it, and could scarce express the indignation which its exciter called forth. Soon after breakfast the following morning, Sir Frederic and Dr. Moreland called at the Grange, to escort the fair friends to the vicarage. "Are we going to lose you, Miss Forrester?" said the marquis, as she entered the breakfast-room with her hat in her hand, followed by Lady Selina, already equipped for the walk. "Yes,

my lord," she replied; " Lady Selina, and myself, have promised to pass the day with our kind friend, Mrs. Moreland." " Come," said Dauverne, as they crossed the hall, " I will accompany you to the end of the park." " Do so," said the doctor, smiling, " but remember, when once you get within my precincts I am commanding officer, and positively part not with you for the day." " Your sway is so lenient, and your power so circumscribed by mercy," said Dauverne, " that inclination will ever dictate a compliance with your orders."

On reaching the vicarage the children, who had long kept watch at the window, ran out to meet them; and little Rosa threw her chubby arms around the ivory neck of Antonia, and kissed her with unfeigned affection. " You had scarcely left us ten minutes, my love," said Mrs. Moreland, addressing her husband, " when the

young folks, anxious for the arrival of their favourite, commenced a look out ; and, I assure you, until you came in sight, the window was not for a moment deserted." " How flattering is this regard ! " said Antonia, again kissing the forehead of Rosa, as she placed her on the carpet. Sir Frederic extended his hand to seize the child ; but light as a little fairy she slipped by him, and running to Dauverne, sprung upon his knee, and turned to him the cheek still warm with the caresses of Antonia. " Oh, mamma ! " said Ellen, running with tears in her eyes, as Mrs. Moreland, Lady Selina, and Antonia, retired from the dining-room, " the tortoise-shell cat has caught one of the robins, and Percival has thrown a stone and cut her eye." " That was very wrong, very cruel of Percival," said Mrs. Moreland. " Very cruel, mamma ? " questioned Ellen : " what, when the poor

robin was fluttering in her mouth?"

"Yes, my child," replied the fond mother: "Nature and instinct dictated the cat; but passion hurled the stone from the hand of Percival. But come," leading Ellen forward, "we will visit the filbert walk, and hear more of this disaster."

The group which met their eyes on turning an angle in the garden would have graced the pencil of a Gainsborough—Rosa seated with the expiring robin in her lap; the corner of her white frock raised to wipe away a tear, as her little hand stroked the feathers of her favourite: whilst Percival, a few yards beyond her, regret strongly pictured in his open countenance for the stone he had so incautiously thrown, was endeavouring by every stratagem remorse could devise, to entice the unlucky cat, who had taken shelter in one of the branches. "It is not dead, mamma," lisped

Rosa ; " see ! its eyes are open, and it moves its wing—perhaps it may recover." " Never, my love," replied Mrs. Moreland, taking the agonized animal from the hand of the child : " in a case like this, it is more merciful to destroy, than by a scrupulous attention to our own feelings, prolong misery." But the effort was spared her ; for in a faint flutter the bird had expired, and the head dropped powerless from her finger. " My dear boy," continued the affectionate mother, taking the hand of Percival, and returning towards the house, " this incident is sufficient to point out the consequence of rashness : you have injured the cat but not saved the bird : though your countenance betrays that you suffer more than the pain you have inflicted, for you feel it mentally, the cat only bodily." " But the heart, warm in the cause of oppression," observed Lady Selina, " awaits not

the aid of reason ; rashness surely is excusable, when humanity is the instigator." " It is a bad doctrine to inculcate," said Mrs. Moreland, mildly. " Go, my child, and remember that true magnanimity shows itself in coolness and intrepidity ; not in yielding to an impulse which in a moment may perpetrate what whole years of remorse and sorrow can never restore. Percival is of a warm, ardent disposition," she pursued, as they entered the drawing-room, " and frequently obliges his father to read long lectures upon forbearance and moderation. They often remind me of those inimitable lines in my favourite poet, Cowper—

" A father, whose authority, in show
When most severe, and must'ring all its force,
Was but the graver countenance of love ;
Whose favour like the clouds of spring, might
low'r,
And utter now and then an awful voice,
—But had a blessing in its darkest frown,
Threat'ning at once, and nourishing the plant,"

The day passed in rational enjoyment—no smile of scorn—no laugh of ridicule—no satirical gesture, or unpitying lash of wit, marked its progress, or painted the cheek of innocence with distressing blushes: and when the hour of separation arrived, they returned with regret to the more splendid, but less substantial comforts of the Grange. “Auspicious fate, I thank thee!” exclaimed Sir Frederic, meeting Antonia the following morning alone in the library. “Miss Forrester,” closing the door and seating himself by her side, “I am come a humble suppliant.”—“What, from the vicarage?” interrupted the unsuspecting Antonia. “Say, what can Dr. and Mrs. Moreland solicit which I can refuse?” “Will you be less merciful to the nephew?” resumed Sir Frederic. “Will you when he acknowledges himself the suppliant, withdraw the concurrence so readily held forth?” “Nay,” said Antonia,

smiling ; " first let me hear the petition, and then I shall be enabled to decide on its merits." "The petition is," said Sir Frederic, snatching her hand, and eagerly kissing it—" a heart. Long have I sought this opportunity; long have I sought to express my feelings—to declare, that from the first moment I beheld you, love the most violent—the most lasting, took possession of my soul. To offer you my hand and fortune—to offer you the adoration of a being, whose summit of happiness, whose criterion of bliss, reaches not beyond your affection."

Antonia started; her cheek grew pale; her hand trembled. The air of playfulness which had o'erspread her features vanished, and regret and sorrow resumed its place. " Sir Frederic," she articulated, in accents low but firm, " I am amazed, distressed, at this declaration : grateful am I for

your opinion, sensible am I of your generosity: as a friend, as a brother, I would acknowledge you; but as a lover——” Dauverne rose to her recollection: her voice faltered; tears stole from her eyes——“never, never.”

Sir Frederic dropped her hand, sprung from his chair, and paced the library. “Your friendship!” he exclaimed, “cruel, insensible girl! Yet stay, what have I dared to utter? Oh no! not cruel,” gazing mournfully on her, “for you weep for the man you renounce. Those tears, Miss Forrester—those precious tears are like the balm of heaven upon the wounded heart: they bid the chastened being live: they fall for the pangs they have inflicted. Yet may not time—may not perseverance—may not assiduous love weaken the resolve? May I not hope the boon I must not now possess may yet be mine? Say, Antonia; name but

a period, however distant; and by my patient, my un murmuring compliance, judge of my affection."

"Spare me, Sir Frederic," said Antonia, rising; "my resolution cannot weaken—my affection cannot alter."

"Ah! may I believe what I hear?"

questioned Stanley: "you have not a heart to give? Happy, envied being, who can boast its possession!" "I did not say so," she falteringly articulated, as a quickening blush mantled her face and bosom. "Sacred be your secret! sacred be your affection!" said Sir Frederic, after a painful pause.

"With the title you have given me, I *must* be satisfied; and remember, Miss Forrester, when you want support—when you want assistance—when you want a defender, you have a *brother*." He pressed her hand to his lips, rushed from the library, and precipitately quitted the Grange.

"Whither so fast, Stanley?" in-

quired Dauverne, who was sauntering with Lady Selina in the park. Sir Frederic started at the sound of his voice. Still pale with agitation—still trembling beneath the tumult of his soul, he raised his eyes from the ground, touched his hat to Selina, and would have again proceeded, had not Dauverne caught his arm? “For heaven’s sake, what is the matter? are you ill?” Still he answered not; while Lady Selina, fearful of betraying the emotion his distress excited, stole swiftly away, and hastened to the house. “In tears!” she exclaimed, entering Antonia’s *boudoir*—“have you seen Sir Frederic Stanley? Ah! your countenance tells me you have: your countenance declares the cause of his emotion. He loves you, Antonia; and your heart cannot requite his tenderness. Strange, inexplicable girl! cruel, envied friend! insensible to the merit of Stanley. Had you seen him

as I did," and tears streamed down her cheeks—"had you seen his agitation, you must have relented." "Selina," said Antonia, faintly, "I pity, I esteem, but cannot love him." "Poor Sir Frederic!" sobbed Lady Selina: 'tis you alone, Antonia, can make him happy; you alone deserve the heart that is rejected. Oh! why—why does he love you?" and her head reclined on the shoulder of her friend. "And yet," musing, "can a being so pure love one so fragile?" "What mean you, Selina?" inquired Antonia. "Alas! I know not," pursued the artless girl; "and yet I would lay down my life to see him less miserable."

The secret was disclosed—Selina loved Sir Frederic. Long had she struggled against affection: long had she seen him devoted to her friend; yet no direful passion, no malignancy mingled in her emotions. She envied

not Antonia, even at the moment she sighed to possess her qualities; and hiding her burning blushes on her bosom, poured into her ear the confession of her weakness.

“Dauverne,” said Sir Frederic, hurrying him towards the vicarage, “I am the most unfortunate of beings: my presumptuous hopes are punished, for Miss Forrester renounces my love, and for my adoration offers friendship.” A sensation, not of pain, neither can I say of pleasure, thrilled the heart of Dauverne—a sensation which whispered, Antonia yet is free; but that freedom is erected on the basis of Stanley’s disappointment. “Yet in so delicate, so tender a manner, did she decline my proffered hand,” he continued, “that sooner than forfeit the title she has given me, I will forego the dangerous pleasure of her society: I will tear myself from Warwickshire, nor suffer my eyes to gaze upon her beauty.

I will live on the remembrance of my incomparable, my charming, my compassionating *sister*; for sooner would I possess her esteem than the love of all the sex." "Stanley," said Dauverne, endeavouring to assume an air of cheerfulness, "recollect the errand which brought you to the vicarage: Mahala was the most perfect of beings till you beheld Miss Forrester. Time, that never-failing specific, absence, and novelty, or I am no prognosticator, will effect a cure." "Never, never," repeated Sir Frederic, vehemently: "the world contains not a second Antonia." "But what is your plan?" questioned his friend. "Instantly to set off for London," answered the baronet; "and, if I feel as forlorn and comfortless as I do at this moment, take passage in the first ship that sails for India, and see what may be effected by change of climate." "Do so, my dear fellow," said Dauverne, laugh-

ing; "and bring back a fair adventurer, dignified with the enviable title of *nabobess*, and shining in the splendid gems of the east." "No *exportation* goods for me," exclaimed Sir Frederic, with momentary cheerfulness: "for, by heaven! though an angel, in the pursuit of a husband, met my ravished eye, yet would I remember the speculative project, which commenced in the extirpation of modesty and diffidence, those greatest ornaments of woman, and throw her, "like a loathsome weed, away." "London, that great mart for beauty, will, if I mistake not, defeat this projected trip," observed Dauverne. "Dauverne, this gaiety is misplaced," said Sir Frederic, relapsing into his former dejection: "if you could see my heart, you would pity, not deride." "Deride!" repeated Dauverne, warmly—"you wrong me; none can more keenly feel your disappointment; for none, believe me,

more sensibly acknowledges the merits of Miss Forrester." "Ah, my friend!" exclaimed Sir Frederic, grasping his arm, and looking anxiously in his face, "you too love Antonia!" "Heaven knows how much!" sighed Dauverne. "Heaven knows there's not a created being upon whom my soul so ardently doats!" "Happy, envied friend!" articulated Stanley: "suppose the heart of Antonia as fondly attached as your own." "Name not the supposition," interrupted Dauverne, with a start of agony: "it would be the confirmation of my misery—my keenest, bitterest sorrow. Lady Geraldine—" "For one Antonia, a thousand Lady Geraldines would I renounce," interrupted Sir Frederic. "But honour," resumed Dauverne, in a low emphatic tone of voice, as they reached the door of the vicarage, "is even dearer than Antonia."

Dr. Moreland, the confidant of Sir

Frederic's love and intentions, traced in his countenance the failure of his embassy; and having listened to his complaints, without a dissenting voice, heard of his immediate departure.

Delicacy towards Antonia, as well as to his own feelings, demanded the sacrifice, and in less than an hour, the baronet, bidding a hasty farewell to Dauverne, and the inhabitants of the vicarage, threw himself into his cur-ricle, and steered his course for London.

Still were the fair friends in the *boudoir*—still was Sir Frederic Stanley the subject of conversation: still did Antonia endeavour so soothe Lady Selina, and steal from her too sensitive mind the pang of self-reproof, when a gentle tap at the door announced an interruption, and a servant presented to Antonia a note from the vicarage.” “Come to us, my sweet Antonia,” wrote Mrs. Moreland: “the children

are gone to dine in the village, and we wish for a long day in your society. Besides, my good man, depending on the privileges you have allowed him, is desirous of a little private conversation. Sir Frederic Stanley has just left us for London: therefore fear not an interruption."

Lady Selina wept as she perused the note; and when, in compliance with its contents, her friend quitted her, she hastened to her own apartment, to muse on the perversity of destiny.

Ever considerate, ever kind, Dr. and Mrs. Moreland exerted their spirits to enliven Antonia's. They saw, through the dejection of her countenance, a heart tremblingly alive to the sorrow she had unwillingly occasioned; and every sigh which agitated her bosom augmented, in their ideas, the disappointment of Sir Frederic, as it served only to raise her in their esti-

mation. "My nephew," said the doctor, as soon as the cloth was removed, "has informed us of the occurrence of the morning. I could have wished it had been otherwise, Miss Forrester; for I know no woman I felt so desirous to call my niece. May I," he continued, "claiming the prerogative of friendship, inquire your reasons for refusing Sir Frederic? Think not, Antonia, that curiosity, or a blind partiality for his interest, dictates: no, my young friend," taking her hand, and tenderly pressing it; "it is affection for you—it is concern for your happiness, which is the inducement. From the moment I received you into my protection, I felt a more than common interest in your fate; I felt an affection I cannot describe—an affection which succeeding interviews have rendered almost paternal."

Antonia raised the hand of the good

divine to her lips: she would have spoken; but her heart was too full of gratitude to admit of utterance.

“You are young, enthusiastic, romantic,” he resumed—“a stranger to the world, a stranger to the human heart: I tremble for your peace, but not for your conduct: say then, why so steadily, so peremptorily, have you rejected Sir Frederic?” “Because,” replied Antonia, faintly, “my heart, which I have ever found a faithful counsellor, refused to acknowledge him; and when I marry,” and her eyes sparkled with new-born energy, “I must feel for the chosen being, a love which will defy every adverse fortune—a love which will renounce every allurements of life, and alone glory in its influence over a husband’s affection.” She paused, and looked timidly towards Mrs. Moreland. “What am I to think?” said the doctor, again taking her hand, and looking anxiously in

her face: "your heart cannot acknowledge the merit of Sir Frederic, yet he is young, he is handsome, he is amiable, he is rich; surely if that heart was disengaged it would not be thus insensible." Antonia started, trembled, and her neck and face were suffused with blushes.

"Like colours o'er the morning skies,
As bright, as transient too!"

"It is," she exclaimed, with an emotion which nearly deprived her of breath. "And until you meet with a being who can requite its tenderness and appreciate its virtues, may it continue so!" fervently replied Dr. Moreland. "Oh, may that invaluable gem, that rich treasure never be bestowed on a being who cannot openly, avowedly return his own!" Antonia gazed fearfully on him. "May it," he continued, "never experience the anguish of self-reproach! may it never

droop beneath the pressure of ill-requited love!" "How kind are such tender wishes, breathed from the lips of friendship!" murmured Antonia, as a soft sigh swelled her bosom. "Excellent, worthy man," and she again pressed his hand to her lips, "how poor are words to express my gratitude!" "Express it then by letting me see you less dejected," he answered: "come, Antonia, for henceforth by that familiar title must I address you, banish this cast of thought; it ill suits features by nature decked in smiles, for know that cheerfulness is the daughter of content." "And for me," said Mrs. Moreland, smiling, "if you are obstinately determined never to call me aunt, surely you will not object to nominate me friend." Tears sprung to the eyes of Antonia as she fervently pressed her hand; she wished to express her feelings, but emotion restrained her, and, rising

from her chair; she walked hastily to the window.

In the evening the children returned delighted from their visit: each had a thousand little anecdotes to relate, and each were equally anxious to commence their story. Stanley, pleased with everything he had seen, spoke in raptures of the smiling appearance of the corn-fields and rich promises of plenty which a bountiful Providence had yielded for the use of man. Percival had heard the martial drum and fife, and seen the neatly trimmed soldiers march on the village green: the mania of glory had seized upon his infant mind, and nought but the clang of war and renown of conquest could gain admittance. Ellen had heard a piping bullfinch, and Rosa had seen a litter of kittens. The delighted parents listened to their prattle until the clock struck nine; and then enriching them with a kiss of peace dismissed them to

retrace in the flights of imagination the pleasures of the day. "Many pretend to affirm," said the doctor, as the door closed upon the children, "that the infant mind is like a sheet of blank paper, open to receive every impression which the hand of instruction or the force of example may note. I must confess it is a doctrine I can never inculcate, for in my own family I daily receive incontrovertable proofs to the contrary. Nature, certainly, stamps us with different pursuits and propensities; or why do we see in babes nestling at the breast the gust of passion and the smile of patience." "I am afraid you will vote me a plunderer," said Dauverne, looking in at the window: "I am ~~at~~ purposely to run away with Miss Forrester, for, positively, we can admit of no more of these desertions." Antonia started—thanks to the gloom of night, that

friendly veil to palpable emotion, the doctor saw not her countenance, else would the doubts which affection had called forth been realized—else would he have read the problem of Sir Frederic's rejection.

"Are you ready, Miss Forrester?" continued Dauverne; "and will you admit me as an escort?" Antonia arose from her chair. "Patience, patience, my good child!" said the doctor, taking her hand; "don't indulge him in his whims: let him come round and quietly take a seat; for trust me it will not be darker in half an hour hence." "True," said Dauverne, "but the dew falls heavy, and the grass begins to imbibe its moisture." Again Antonia arose, and again the doctor would have detained her, but the argument of Dauverne was not to be disputed, and taking an affectionate leave of her friends she joined him in the garden.

Dauverne drew her passive hand through his arm and proceeded without speaking towards the park.

Antonia felt her cheeks glow, and her heart beat against her side. Still were they silent—still did they walk as though, instead of spring, the frost of January nipped the air: at length, with eyes fixed on the ground, wishing yet, dreading to break the silence—"The night is pleasant," observed Antonia, "and the moon shining on the white blossoms of the chesnuts—" "The moon," interrupted Dauverne, looking around, "where, Miss Forrester?" Antonia now remembered the moon had not yet risen, and in a voice low and broken, articulated, "Perhaps it was a ray of light from the cottage window of old William." Dauverne admitted the excuse, and again they sank to silence.

The soft and plaintive warbling of a nightingale, pouring forth a softer

lody from a neighbouring branch, caused a second observation. They paused to hear her plaint—Dauverne caught the infection, and gazed enraptured on the glowing features of his companion. “Does that bird,” he exclaimed, “mourn departed bliss? or does he, like me, deplore the rigour of cruel destiny? Unhappy Stanley! too lovely, too perfect Antonia!” “It is very damp,” said Antonia, regardless of his exclamation, and folding her thin mantle over her bosom, “do let us hasten to the Grange.”

“Miss Ferrester,” said Lady Geraldine, as she entered the drawing-room, “what say you to an excursion to Cheltenham? We have planned a pleasant trip, and only wait the return of Carberry to put it in execution.” “Dauverne will drive Geraldine in the phaeton,” said the marchioness, “and——” “Not I, indeed,” interrupted her ladyship; “there is some-

thing so insufferably stupid in a *tête-à-tête* that it is of all things what I most detest." "Always, and with every one?" whispered Sunderland. "I don't know," replied Lady Geraldine; "some, certainly, possess greater powers of pleasing than others." "When the objects are like the present," said Glendenning, glancing at Lady Selina, "the power, your ladyship must allow, is extensive." "Nay, that depends upon opinion," replied Lady Geraldine: "but as for Daurverne he is absolutely grown so silent, so moralizing, and so vapourish, that I should die of *ennui* before I had gone three miles from the Grange. Positively, if he does not alter he will be the most stupid mate poor woman was ever cursed with." The marchioness laughed, Antonia sighed, and Sunderland again whispered. "You are such a tormenting being, quite tiresome - do give me my hand," affectedly

drawled out her ladyship: " 'pon my honour, Sunderland, if I was not the most prudent creature in the universe swords and pistols would be the alternative. But see, my hero comes"—for at that instant the door opened, and the marquis and Dauverne entered. The conversation became general, and at an early hour Lady Selina and Antonia left the company and retired to their apartments.

CHAP. IV.

THE destined morning for the excursion to Cheltenham was mild and invigorating : the sun shone with unrivalled splendour, but the refreshing breeze from the "cloud-capt" summits of the hills temporized its heat and subverted its power. Nature was refreshed by a recently fallen shower, and the quick set hedges and blossoming orchards cast forth scents of the sweetest odours. Swift, but calm as a liquid mirror reflecting the surrounding scenery meandered the Avon, now gliding over its pebbled bed, now bubbling against its tufted banks in dull monotonous. The fishing narrow the vicarage, the spot of the vicarage church, and the noise of engines tempering and sterilizing the

seemed fixed to affirm that art may embellish nature.

At an early hour the inmates of the Grange assembled, save the marquis, who, unequal to the fatigues of a party of pleasure, had not yet risen. All was bustle and confusion: servants running in every quarter, bells ringing, dogs barking, carriages rattling, horses neighing. Lord Carberry proposed driving Lady Geraldine, Antonia, and Mr. Sunderland in his barouche. Dauverne offered himself as charioteer to the marchioness, and the remainder of the party, consisting of Lady Selina, Colonel Arkerman, and Captain Glendenning were to complete the cavalcade on horseback. The plan proposed was to pass a long morning at Cheltenham, to visit the Spa, the Well walks, the libraries, and every other object worthy attention, and from thence to proceed to the sylvan picturesque village of Presbury, dine and

pass the night at its hotel, and return to the Grange the following morning.

Antonia, disconcerted at the arrangement, cast a look of expressive import at the marchioness, who was already seated in the phaeton, and repressing a half-smothered sigh, threw herself by the side of Lady Geraldine. Sunderland, with an appropriate speech for his good fortune, followed, and in a second, with *scientific skill*, Lord Carberry cracked his whip and distanced the rest of the party. Prancing, curvetting, the high-spirited animals bounded swiftly on; while Antonia, from the velocity of the motion, lost half the beauties which every fresh turning in the road disclosed.

Lady Geraldine and Sunderland were condemning as little better than a libel a late ingenious production, because it had so *undisguisedly* stated the actions of certain dear friends: and then, with

all the *good nature* of fashionable freedom, turned the discourse to the private concerns of individuals, who daily purchase with their peace, their honour, and inheritance the bauble notoriety. "By the bye," exclaimed Sunderland, "there is the most perplexing, agitating paragraph in to-day's paper your ladyship can imagine: it states, that the Countess of ——— eloped on Wednesday last from her lords house with Mr. ———, taking with her the whole of her jewels, but leaving her lovely children behind."

"That was by way of memento of herself," said Lady Geraldine, laughing. "She has, most indisputably, left the weightiest concern," replied Sunderland: "but it appears a strange smuggled piece of business, for I have not received the least intimation, and Glendon makes a point, when I am absent from London, to dispatch all the anecdotes of the *haut ton*." "Silly,

silly woman!" repeated Lady Geraldine, archly, "not to have consulted the honourable Mr. Sunderland."

"Nay, your ladyship is very flattering," rejoined Sunderland, "but——"

At that instant the horses, starting at a gang of gipsies encircling a fire on the roadside, tore violently on; Lord Casberry, unable to retain his seat, was, by a sudden jerk, precipitated over the hedge into a corn field, and for several minutes lay stunned by the severity of the motion. Lady Geraldine uttered the most piercing shrieks; Anthony, and January, leapt back in the carriage while Sunderland, pale as an asphodel, held the reins, and retaining in the power of his hand the reins of the very Geraldine, the lady in question, of his daughter—forgetful of his state as a man and alive with the consciousness of a terrible falling from the high seat—of the danger to the mother, he caught the reins of

soothing the afflicted—if life is sweet to the indigent in reaping the rich harvest of labour, so is it sweet to the man who pictures nothing beyond it ! Prostrate in the ditch he fell, his cloaths smeared with mud, his hat lost, his face, hands, and neckcloth torn by the brambles, and his glass dangling from his button hole, the ensignia of fashion, shattered and broken. Such was the Bond-street beau, the honourable Thomas Sunderland, as he lay struggling in the ditch for pre-eminence, eager to attain the surface, eager to escape the threat of suffocation.

The maddened animals pursued their course, spurred by the shrieks of the nearly frantic Geraldine ; while Antonia, insensible to either fear or danger, continued to lay motionless on the seat. At the entrance of Cheltenham, before a neat white residence, in sight of its inhabitants, who could see, could pity,

but not rescue, the vehicle was upset, and the unfortunate girls hurled into the road: yet still were the horses unchecked—still did they gallop forward, as in every direction flew fragments of the mutilated barouche. Long were the senses of Antonia suspended—long were the efforts of humanity baffled—feebly did respiration return—languidly did her eyes unfold and rest on the being whose friendly bosom formed her pillow. Her dress bespoke her a daughter of peace—her actions a daughter of charity. A light brown sarsnet encircled her delicate figure, a white handkerchief modestly concealed her neck, and a plain unornamented cap shaded with feminine softness a pair of expressive eyes, black as the raven's plumage. "How dost thee feel thyself?" whispered the sympathizing quaker, still strenuously chaffing the temple of the sufferer. Antonia's lips motioned a thought she

would have spoken, but the sound was fled; again her head dropped, and again she sank into insensibility.

Mr. Leech, the apothecary, who, hearing of the accident, breathless with haste attended the summons, ordered her immediately to be conveyed to bed, as the slightest attempt of a removal in her present state threatened the most alarming consequences. Happily no fracture had taken place, but from the bruises she had received, unless kept exceedingly still, much was to be apprehended.

Lady Geraldine, who experienced no inconvenience except from fright, terrified at the appearance of Antonia, proposed sending directly to the remainder of the party to acquaint them of the accident; and Obadiah, the long-tried attendant of Jonathan Penrose, for it was no other than the rich banker, on whose humanity chance had thrown our heroine, sallied forth,

big with the momentous intelligence,
to catch the old mare, brousing on the
rich pasturage in the orchard. Lucy,
like a spoiled child, was not to be
caught; but by a bribe: her best years
had passed in the service of the
cottage, and now she was suffered to
wear out the remaining few without
feeling the lag of labour. Obadiah
had forgotten his accustomed basket
of oats, and throwing a few more peb-
bles in his hat approached with his
holster to strike the mare. Lucy—
how cunning as was Obadiah still more
cunning was Lucy!—she would not let
him take her until well up the
hill, and then turned longingly back.
Obadiah had contrived equally well—
he knew how far he was from the
cottage, and he trusted it was the last time
he would see the mare. The mare was
not so much as the mare of the cottage.

ere the usual form was gone through ; Lucy was caught and saddled, Obadiah mounted, and proceeded on his mission. About half a mile from Cheltenham, three gentlemen, Dauverne, Carberry, and Arkerman, stopped him.

" My friend," inquired Dauverne, in a voice of agitation, " have you heard any intelligence concerning a carriage?"—"Yea," interrupted Obadiah, " it was upon that self-same business I came to seek thee ; though as to the carriage not a piece remains bigger than my hand." " Damn the carriage !" exclaimed Carberry : " the ladies ; speak, what of the ladies?" " Miss Forrester," questioned Dauverne, almost breathless. " I know not whether the young woman's name be Forest." replied Obadiah ; " but one be mortally frightened, and t'other mortally hurt." " God of heaven !" ejaculated Dauverne, thrown off his

guard, and almost frantic at the confirmation of Antonia's danger. "Where are they? in mercy direct me to them."

"Nay, prithee, don't take on so, young man," said Obadiah; they be fallen into good hands, for I have lived five and thirty years with Jonathan Penrose, and I never knew him act inhumanly to man or beast." "Torturing being!" vociferated Carberry, "to keep us so long on the tenter-hooks of expectation." "I put thee on tenter-hooks," repeated Obadiah, angrily; "neighbour, dost thou know thou art speaking to a follower of peace?" "A follower of the devil," interrupted Arkerman: "and dost *thou* know," with a satirical whine, "*thou art* speaking to a lord?" "If thou be'st a lord, I be a man," replied Obadiah; "and that's more than all lords be, let me tell thee." Dauverne taking out his purse threw it on the ground. "Here, take this, cormorant, but tell

me where is——” Antonia, he would have added, but fearful of betraying the real state of his heart, he checked himself, and concluded, “the ladies.”

This was a language which ever spoke home to the feelings of Obadiah; he took up the purse, and deliberately consigning it to his pocket, pointed out the white house on the road-side: Dauverne waited not a further explanation, but clapping spurs to his horse, followed by Lord Carberry, disappeared in a moment. Colonel Arkerman returned to console the terrified marchioness and Lady Selina; while Obadiah, fearful of endangering his neck, lest peradventure, the injury should be beyond the skill of Mr. Leech, in a quiet kind of jog trot, retraced the road to his master’s dwelling. Warm, panting, breathless, Dauverne sprung from his horse at the hall-door; and without announcing his name; without a single

inquiry, rushed into the parlour, and beheld Lady Geraldine. "Heaven and earth, it is as I dreaded!" he articulated, striking his hand against his forehead—"it is my Antonia!" "*Your Antonia*," repeated Lady Geraldine, in a voice of astonishment, "bless me, Mr. Dauverne, are you mad?" "Yes, distracted, frantic," throwing off all disguise and pacing the chamber; suddenly recollecting himself: "Lady Geraldine," he implored, in accents more composed, "is Miss Forrester in this house? is her life endangered?" "Peace, peace, young man," said Jonathan Penrose, entering the parlour, things are not so bad as thee fanciest." "Will she live?" articulated Dauverne, snatching his hand in grateful rapture. "Oh, say but yes! say, that I shall again behold her in health and happiness, and as a ministering angel of comfort I will bless you." "For the sake of common

sense quit the stilts of romance," said Lady Geraldine, contemptuously. "Do pray, Mr. —, Mr. Quaker, tell this magnanimous hero, the fate of his dulcinea?" "Thou forgettest, young woman," said Mr. Penrose, severely. "the proverb of doing to others as thou would'st be done by; but though pride runs away with thy heart; and though the sycophants of this world pay homage to thy exterior beauty, know from the quaker thou despisest, that internal worth, humility, and compassion, are the brightest jewels in a maiden's crown."

Lady Geraldine, mortified yet unwilling to betray it, cast a look of indignation on the speaker, and humming an Italian air, walked to the window. "Oh, what long faces!" she exclaimed, bursting into a fit of laughter. "There's my silly mamma, and my pretty sister, looking as rueful, as if they had been in the ba-

rouche. Ah, you wretch !" shaking her head at Sunderland, and extending her hand in a threatening attitude, " to think of that dear adorable self, when I was in danger." Instantly the door was thrown open, and the remainder of the Cheltenham party made their appearance. " Thomas Sunderland !" exclaimed the quaker, gazing in astonishment on the mutilated beau. " Jonathan Penrose !" articulated Sunderland, in the same accents. " Yea, the self-same," replied the quaker. " Yea, the self-same," echoed Sunderland. " Where is my friend ? where is my dear Antonia ?" inquired the gentle Selina, as the tears streamed down her cheeks. " Is she the only sufferer ? My dear Sir, let me see her ; let me attend her," laying her hand on the arm of Penrose, and looking imploringly in his face. " If she can be sensible of the offices of friend-

ship; the presence of Selina will sooth her." "Art thou the sister of that woman?" pointing to Lady Geraldine. "Yes," murmured Selina. "Thou nature has given thee compassion for both," rejoined the quaker. "And education," said Lady Geraldine, haughtily, "has given thee impertinence for *thy* whole generation." "Never mind what he says," whispered Sunderland, as Mr. Penrose led Selina from the parlour; "he is the strangest quiz in the universe, and pays no more distinction to rank or beauty, than we do to merit. Why he has absolutely offended me a thousand times, for he will speak the *truth*." "The truth, Mr. Sunderland," repeated her ladyship. "That is—is—is—he will say what he thinks. But promise me, dear Lady Geraldine, do promise me not to mind him." "Not I truly," she replied, contemp-

uously, "of any being half so insignificant." "What an unfortunate accident this is!" observed the marchioness. "I really thought I should have died, when I saw Sunderland looking so miserable on the road-side: and as for poor Dauverne, he was little better than a maniac." "He was so anxious about my fate too," said Lady Geraldine, satirically, "that when he saw me safe, he could scarce contain himself—I actually thought he would have gone distracted." "It was very natural," said the marchioness: "I do think you will be the happiest couple in the world." "Oh! that we shall," rejoined her ladyship, glancing at Dauverne, who sat with his arms folded, and his eyes bent upon the carpet, "for I love him with just as much fervour as he loves me." "Cruel Lady Geraldine!" whispered Sunderland, "recall that petrifying declaration, unless you wish to see me

expire." "I thought I should have seen that this morning," she replied, with an arch smile: "I have not forgot the flying leap you took, when on the wings of fear you soared from the barouche, and left poor me to the mercy of four merciless animals."

"You do me injustice; 'pon my honour, your ladyship does me injustice—it was you who instigated that dangerous experiment—it was to save you I tore myself from your side: your shrieks inspired me with fresh courage; fired me with more than mortal daring; and, without reflecting on the impracticability, I sprung from the barouche, for the sole purpose of throwing myself before the maddened horses, stopping their career, saving you or perishing." "And the ditch," said Lord Carberry, with a smile of incredulity, "intervened and defeated the project." "Well, well, never mind," exclaimed Lady Geraldine,

holding out her hand; "here's the pledge of peace; I forgive you, for sure as fate I should have followed the same impulse, had it pointed to safety." "What occasioned the disaster?" inquired Glendenning. "The leaders took fright at a gang of vagrants," replied the earl; "and that little skittish devil, Vixen—" "Damn Vixen!" reiterated Sunderland, whose sprained knee at the instant gave him a twinge, "she's spoiled my dancing at Lady Graystock's ball to-morrow night." "If that had been all the mischief," observed Arkerman, "though she had spoiled your dancing to eternity, the world would not have missed it." "Not ~~miss~~ my dancing," said the mortified bear. "I who have borne the bell at Bath, ran away with the palm of victory at Brighton, and astonished the ~~gaze~~ at London—~~not~~ miss my dancing."

The ~~unfortunate~~ subject, ~~Cr...~~

enjoyed his vexation, and Dauverne, disgusted with their frivolity, and anxious to hear of Antonia, hastily rose from his chair and left the apartment. He listened at the foot of the stairs, but no sound was stirring: the mild accents of Antonia reached not his ear: she did not—perhaps she could not speak: the thought was agony: the necessity for restraint no longer existed, and tears of unfeigned anguish burst from his labouring heart. “If I should lose thee, Antonia,” he articulated, “if heaven should take thee to itself, there will not exist a being half so wretched, half so pitiable.” “Do not weep, my tender-hearted girl; neighbour Leech assures me there is no danger, and that a few days will restore thy young friend to health.” Dauverne could not see the speaker, but he listened with eager unbreathing attention. “But she does not know me,” sobbed the voice

of Lady Selina : " even when I took her hand, when I kissed her pale cheek, she moved not—she looked as calm, as still, as though she were already dead." Dauverne started, and with difficulty repressed the swelling sob. " Consider the fright she has experienced," rejoined Mr. Penrose ; " consider the bruises she has received ; and then thee wilt not wonder at her being exhausted. Come, cheer up, in a few days, I tell thee, all will be well." " And may I stay and watch her ?" implored the sweet girl. " May I remain with my friend until she can be removed ?" " Aye, surely may'st thou," replied the quaker, " and heaven will smile upon thy services."

Dauverne more satisfied returned to the parlour ; and Mr. Penrose and Lady Selina joined them. " What is to be done ?" said the marchioness, as soon as Selina had answered the in-

quiries after Antonia—"Miss Forrester cannot be removed, and we cannot remain here. Besides the carriages are waiting." For servants had been dispatched to the inn to procure chaises. "I have requested permission of Mr. Penrose to remain with Antonia," said Lady Selina, as the party arose to depart. "To remain!" exclaimed the marchioness and Lady Geraldine: "Yes, my dear mother, with your leave, I shall certainly make a longer visit at Cheltenham than was intended." "Well, do as you please—good bye!" "Will you not see Miss Forrester before you leave us?" "No, Selina," replied the marchioness; "I can do no good, and a sick room always shocks my feelings." "Supposing thou wert ill, and thy friends all said the same thing," replied Jonathan Penrose; "what a poor deserted wretch thou would'st be." "Wretch!" repeated Lady

Geraldine: "surely the man is insane." "'Tis his way," whispered Sunderland. "Defend me from him and his ways too," said her ladyship, "they are the strangest I ever met with." "Say, what would'st thou think, then?" resumed Penrose, regardless of Lady Geraldine's observation, and again addressing the marchioness. "I think of nothing so improbable," she replied, proudly: "the Marchioness of Allingthorn, either in sickness or health need not fear being deserted:—her attendants are too numerous to admit of the possibility." "And if thou hast none to surround thy couch but hirelings," said the quaker, "heaven help thee!" "They are better than *cynics*, at any rate," ironically remarked Lady Geraldine. "As for thee, thou daughter of vanity,"—the marchioness bit her lip, "thou art so accustomed to falsehood truth shocks thee: but go where thou wilt, unless thy manners alter, re-

spect will shun and affection desert thee." " This impertinence is not to be borne," muttered Lady Geraldine. " Mr. Sunderland, is this quaker guardian of your's acquainted with my rank ?" " Mr. Penrose," said Sunderland, taking the hand of the angry beauty, " your freedom in addressing this lady, is as ill-timed as it is ill-mannered—possibly, you know her not to be Lady Geraldine Daturverne." " Yea, I know her to be the daughter of a man whom the world calls marquis," answered the quaker : " and 'tis well I know thee to be the son of a man of worth ; for thy conduct, silly boy, would never proclaim it. Thou thinkest thyself licensed, because the vain distinctions of man call thee honourable :—but know that a fool may be the offspring of dignified parents ; and that it is the man whose actions exalt himself who claims respect. If thou wer't a fool I should pity thee ; but as a coxcomb, I de-

spise thee." Lady Geraldine's mortification gave place to a fit of laughter, while Sunderland, turning to the marchioness, exclaimed—"For heaven's sake! let's be off; we have all heard enough—what a strange taste is Lady Selina's to volunteer remaining with such a bore!—Not to be Emperor of Morocco, would I pass a week beneath the same roof;" "We have, indeed, heard enough," replied the marchioness. "Selina's affection must be very strong to stand the brunt of such impertinence." "I always speak the truth," said the quaker, drily; "and while I do that, thy daughter here," laying his hand on the shoulder of Lady Selina, "need not fear me." Lord Carberry, Arkerman, and Glendenning, who fearful of drawing on themselves the severity of his sarcasms, had been silent listeners of the conversation, gladly seconded the motion, and bowing coolly to their host, the

party repaired to their carriages. "Selina," said Dauverne, lingering behind, "send for a physician—send instantly for Dr. Stiptic: you know not how precious is the life of Antonia!" "I have already proposed it," she replied, "but Mr. Leech, and Mr. Penrose, assure me it is unnecessary—assure me, a few days will restore her to her friends." "Oh, may the assurance be prophetic!" sighed Dauverne, as he bid her adieu. "To-morrow, Selina, at an early hour you will see me. How cruel are the modes of custom!" he mentally ejaculated, as he vaulted into his saddle, for he had resigned his seat in the phaeton to the Earl of Carberry—compelled to wear restraint—compelled to mingle with the herd I despise; while Antonia, the chosen mistress of my soul, lingers beneath a stranger's roof on the bed of sickness."

CHAP. V. ■

It was late in the morning ere Antonia awoke. Rest, that panacea of exhausted nature, had renovated her spirits, and restored recollection. The accident of the preceding day, the mild compassion of the quaker, and her own terror, all arose to her imagination: she drew aside the curtain, to express her gratitude, and beheld seated by her side, not the face of a stranger, but her esteemed friend Mrs. Moreland, her affectionate Selina, and the sympathizing Mahala, whom her heart already began to signalize. "I am better, much better," said Antonia, in answer to the kind inquiries of her friends: "but where are my fellow-sufferers? How is Lady Geraldine?"

how is Mr. Sunderland? and Lord Carberry?" "They are quite well, my love," replied Mrs. Moreland; "excepting fright, they fortunately have experienced no inconvenience. But I must not let my joy subdue my charity," rising; "for there are two gentlemen below, who anxiously await the morning's report." "How very kind!" said the invalid, faintly smiling. "The marquis of Allington called for me this morning," resumed Mrs. Moreland; "and we thought to have been here first; but Mr. Dauverne gave us the slip, and assisted us in alighting at Mr. Penrose's door."

Warren's *rouge vegetal* would have been put to the blush, by the beautiful vermillion which in a moment painted the pale cheek of Antonia: a sensation of rapture shot through her heart, and her eyes sparkled with tell-tale fire. Mrs. Moreland and Lady Selina had already reached the door; but Ma-

hala, in one glance, read the long-cherished secret, and breathed a sympathetic sigh.

On the third day, Antonia was enabled to quit her chamber, and, with the assistance of Lady Selina and the interesting quaker, reached an adjoining sitting-room, and reclined near the opened window on a sofa. "And so, thou thinkest to run away from us," said Mr. Penrose, in reply to Lady Selina's proposition of returning to the Grange. "No, my little favourite, we cannot lose thee yet; and as for the invalid," taking the hand of Antonia, and affectionately pressing it, "as long as we remember the consequence, we shall be unable to regret the accident." "Indeed we shall, my dear father," replied Mahala: "but, methinks, it would be very cruel to desert us, the moment Antonia is able to leave her chamber." "Say no more, Mahala," rejoined Mr. Penrose; "we won't heat

a word about it—at least, not until neighbour Leech gives his sanction.”

Antonia, faint and exhausted from the exertion of rising, could only smile her thanks; while Lady Selina and Mahala, kindly attentive, endeavoured to cheer her by well-timed gaiety. “Ah! here comes the young man who suffered so much when he saw thy sister safe,” said Mr. Penrose, as he looked from the window. “I shall never forget his joy, when I told him things were not so bad as he fancied; for Antonia, after all, is the magnet of attraction. Methinks, he is more than friend: say,” addressing Lady Selina, “wilt thou let me into the secret?” “It is Dauverne!” exclaimed Lady Selina, springing from her chair: “I shall bring him up stairs, Antonia.” And away she bounded.

“Oh, the little sly boots!” resumed the quaker; “she won’t tell me.”—

"Father, dear father, help! help!" implored Mahala—"Antonia is fainting."

Mr. Penrose, to procure assistance, quitted the room at one door, as Selina and Dauverne entered it at the other. "Antonia is dying!" shrieked Selina, gazing on the pallid features of her friend; while Dauverne, rushing to the sofa, wildly snatched her to his bosom. In the terror she experienced, Selina perceived not his anguish—perceived not the tears which fell from his eyes on her forehead, or the agony with which he hung over her—perceived not the seraphic smile which stole o'er the features of Antonia, when, with returning animation, she opened her eyes, and found in whose arms she was supported.

But Mahala marked them all—marked the averted eye, the glow of affection, the vivid blush, the half-smothered sigh—marked the force of

love, and wondered at concealment. Momentary was the delusion o'er the mind of Antonia: conscious dignity returned with the recollection of Dauverne's engagement to Lady Geraldine; and softly expressing her thanks for his attention, she freed herself from his arms, and reclined pale and trembling on the sofa.

In the evening, after the departure of Dauverne, when Lady Selina and Mr. Penrose were walking in the garden, Mahala took her accustomed station by the side of Antonia. "Why dost thee look so pensive?" she inquired, taking her hand: "thy thoughts, or I mistake much, are following the carriage-track to the Grange."

Antonia started, as a quickening blush dappled her fair cheek. "They say, the heart of man should be tried," continued the young quaker: "methinks the heart of thy lover would stand

every test but his affection for thee."

"My lover!" repeated Antonia, in accents of surprise. "Yes, thy lover."

"Indeed, indeed, Mahala," interrupted the invalid, "you are mistaken."

"And what is more," resumed Mahala, significantly smiling, "thy lover hath not much to dread from thy cruelty; for, novice as I am, I can see that thou lovest Percival Dauverne." "I love Mr. Dauverne!" fearfully echoed Antonia. "Nay, do not deny with thy tongue what thy eyes have already confessed," rejoined the quaker. "Mahala," said Antonia, faintly, "name it not! I dare not love Dauverne: he is——" "Married?" questioned the lovely daughter of simplicity. "No, not married." "Then, in love, we dare any thing," resumed Mahala, blushing; "for even I," and her eyes rested on her unadorned habit, "love a flatterer of vanity—a man of war—an officer." "You, Mahala!" eja-

culated the astonished Antonia.—
 “Even I, Mahala, the daughter of Jonathan Penrose,” archly replied the fair quaker. “But why, if single, darrest thou not love Percival Dauverne? He admits not of the restriction; for I am sure he lovest thee.”
 “No, no, Mahala,” murmured Antonia, hiding her blushing face with both hands, and endeavouring to suppress the sensation of pleasure which thrilled her heart. “Yea, yea, but he doth,” she rejoined; “and if that proud woman, thy companion in the carriage, had been killed, he would not have looked half so sad, as when he thought thy life in danger.”

“In six weeks,” said Antonia, with a heavy sigh, “Lady Geraldine Dauverne, that proud woman you speak of, the sister of our beloved Selina, will become his wife.” “His wife!” reiterated Mahala—“wicked, wicked man! What, sacrifice himself for mo-

ney! marry an unfeeling, scornful woman, because she is rich! Sordid; interested being! Instead of thy heart, he merits——” “Stop, Mahala,” interrupted Antonia; “you know not his excellence, or you would not thus condemn him. You know not his disinterested noble nature: it is honour which compels him to fulfil the contract his father formed: honour instigates the sacrifice; and at her shrine he accepts a woman whom his heart cannot approve; because, unlike himself, her manners wear the disguise of fashion, and her actions the stamp of dissipation.” “What! marry the woman he values not, and leave her he loves to pine and die!”

Antonia shuddered. “Thou mayest call it honour,” said Mahala, warmly; “but I call it false honour.” “Alas! how poor a justifier am I,” said Antonia, as tears stole down her cheeks. “I want words, but not inclination:

would that Dr. Moreland was here to defend his absent favourite ! His rhetoric would turn your doubts and suspicions into veneration. He was formed, believe me, for domestic life, not the circles of gaiety : his soul delights in the heroic deeds of virtue, and the exercise of compassion : he has a heart, Mahala, which never turns from the pleadings of distress---a heart which sympathizes in human misery---which feels, which pities the frailties to which he himself is so superior---“ And yet he will marry this Geraldine,” interrupted Mahala. “ He must,” sobbed the distressed girl : “ there is no alternative. He was plighted to her, ere yet maturity had marked her foibles---ere yet he knew her the slave of notoriety, the votary of fashion ; and at his father’s death, he sealed the fatal contract, by rashly promising, that on the day she attained her one-and-twentieth year, he would

take her for his bride. Preparations are already making, and at St. Antholine's the ceremony is to be performed, and their fates united." "Poor girl!" articulated Mahala, affectionately pressing her hand: "if I have wounded thy feelings, pardon me." "As a friend, I esteem," resumed Antonia—"as a brother, I could love him; but——"

She would have continued, had not a suffocating sob checked utterance, and a burning blush refuted her half-finished sentence. Mahala saw her agitation—saw the conflicts of love and shame; and with the consideration of friendship, in a voice of forced gaiety, exclaimed: "Would'st thee have suspected a trader in war to have stolen my foolish heart, Antonia? And yet 'tis even the case; for in spite of resolution, of prudence, and foresight, Charles Powersly has taken it captive, and holds it as secure as

ever he did a French or Spanish prize." "Powersly," repeated Antonia. "Yea, dost thee know Charles Powersly?" questioned Mahala. "What, brother to the Countess of Carberry?" interrogated Antonia. "The same," replied the quaker. "Where could you have seen Captain Powersly?" asked the astonished girl: "I thought the extremes of situation precluded the possibility of intercourse." "Patience! and I will tell thee that too," rejoined Mahala, smiling. "Soon after the memorable battle off Trafalgar, when at most banking-houses lists were opened for the relief of the widows and orphans of those brave fellows who had fallen in the action, Charles Powersly called in Lombard-street, for the purpose of adding his mite to the general contribution. I was just leaving the office, where I had been speaking to my father, and consequently met him in the passage.

Powersley was in his full uniform : never shall I forget the glance I stole. He looked the prototype of a naval officer ; for courage was blended with humanity—valour with discretion—and dignity with condescension. He bowed with easy elegance in passing : I scarce know whether I returned it ; I only know, I flew up stairs, and thought of one of my country's heroes. " Did'st thou meet that fine fellow in the passage, Mahala ? " questioned my father, when he joined me at dinner. " Yea, truly, did I : who is he ? " " One of the French thrashers," replied my father—" one of the supporters of Britain's proud triumph—one of the Trafalgar heroes." " He is indeed a fine fellow," I repeated. " Thee would'st have thought so, had'st thee heard him, Mahala ; for he spoke of the battle—spoke of the immortal Nelson—spoke of the glow of heroism which thrilled every Briton's heart, when that

memorable sentence passed through the fleet—‘ *England expects every man will do his duty.*’ But I wander from the point. Well, the next time I saw him, Antonia, he came with Thomas Sunderland, my father’s hair-brained ward ; and the next time he ventured by himself ; for although we belong to the followers of peace, we are not of that rigid class which excludes merit from any other sect. No : my father welcomed Powersly, because he admired his character, and esteemed his worth. But had he known the stimulus and consequences of those visits, I much doubt whether the reception would have been so cordial, as my father wishes his child, when married, to persevere in the doctrine of quakerism.” “ And is it right to wear reserve with so kind a father ? ” inquired Antonia—“ Is it right to conceal from his knowledge a matter of such importance ? ” “ No, certainly not,” replied

Mahala, blushing; "but we are led on, and led on, by degrees, till at last we take advantage even of affection; for, would'st thee believe it? 'tis on the strength of an excellent parent's love for an only child I build the foundation of my happiness. But the disguise will continue but a short time longer; for Powersly, who is now on a cruize, as soon as he returns to England, means to acquaint my father with our affection, and supplicate his concurrence?" "Do you know the Countess of Carberry?" asked Antonia. "Not personally," replied the quaker; "though, from the accounts which I have heard from her brother, I revere and love her: she is an affectionate sister, a tender, dutiful daughter; and as a wife too good, a great deal, for the inconstant being she has married." The conversation was now interrupted, by the entrance of Obadiah to lay the cloth for supper.

The following morning, Antonia, accompanied by Lady Selina and Mahala, took an airing in Mr. Penrose's chariot, and, on their return, found the Marquis of Allingthorn, Dauverne, Lord Carberry, and Dr. and Mrs. Moreland, awaiting their arrival. The marchioness, under the plea of a cold, though, in fact, unwilling to hear the truths of that most disagreeable of all disagreeable characters to a fine lady, a plain speaker—and Lady Geraldine, who was too much engaged with her dear friend, the Duchess of Delaware, now on a visit at the Grange, and who had kindly promised to accompany the family to St. Antholine's, sent polite messages, regretting the *impossibility* of their visiting Cheltenham. Lord Carberry deplored the cruel necessity which compelled Antonia's longer continuance with the Penroses, and expatiated on the listless vacancy which her absence had spread over the Grange."

"Indeed, Miss Forrester," he exclaimed, as he hung on the back of her chair, "every aspect is changed; every countenance wears the stamp of melancholy, and droops as doth the face of nature, when the sun pours not forth his rays." "And is it thee who should'st remark it?" archly inquired Mahala. "Most certainly," resumed the earl; "for man, with all his boasted qualifications, possesses not the power of self-command; and can this globe produce a being more calculated to subdue indifference?" "So thee thought," rejoined Mahala, "when first thy eyes beheld Cecilia Powersly." "Ah!" said his lordship, as the glow of vexation reddened his cheek, "did you know Miss Powersly?" "I doth know her excellence and thy ingratitude," answered the fair quaker, warm in the cause of deserted innocence. "In you, however, she may boast an able advocate," said the earl, ironi-

cally smiling. "To a feeling mind, she would require no abler advocate than virtue," remarked Mahala, "and that she possesses too rare for thee." "What may be the topic of dispute?" inquired the marquis. "Fidelity," gravely replied Mahala. "Oh! 'tis an old theme, and quite out of fashion," pursued the marquis: "fidelity is as obsolete as industry and early rising; not one of our moderns would understand its meaning." "If dissipation were confined only to those whom thou stylest moderns," observed Mr. Penrose, "we should be enabled to ascertain the mischief; but in every quarter the mania of extravagance rages: the love of dress, of pomp, and vanities, in the very kitchen presides: servants ape their masters—masters their superiors! Alas! what may we not expect from the increasing dissoluteness of morals and the depravity of taste? Surely the primeval virtues of

our forefathers must be exploded : surely *nobility* must degenerate, for it is from that quarter that fashion takes its rise ! The multitude see the mirror held up to their view, and adorn themselves in the same likeness. If such are the practices of our men of rank, which are the greatest objects of contempt—them, or their imitators ?”

“ The great world may yet boast the most heroic virtues,” said Dr. Moreland ; “ surely the obloquy of individuals cannot tarnish the splendour of the whole.” “ God forbid, that the words of my mouth should convey such an insinuation !” rejoined the quaker.

“ *Those* who feel the analogy, let them take it to themselves : *those*, who unmindful of their rank—*those* who disgrace their manhood, by condescending to mingle with the vile herd who follow the *Burkes* and *Belchers* of the day, merit the lash of criticism—merit the censure of their country, whom

their actions disgrace, and *their* pursuits vilify." "But *royalty* delights in the sport," remarked Dauverne: "surely thus premised you cannot wonder at the *lordlings* who tread in the same footsteps." "If majesty were to set the example," said Dr. Moreland, "your heart, Dauverne, would not admit of your turning proselyte." "Nay, I am out of the question, my dear Sir," replied Dauverne, smiling; "you cannot style me a member of fashion's club: I am laughed at, ridiculed by all *choice spirits*, for I have neither *fought a duel*, *seduced* my friend's wife, or *squandered* my inheritance."

Mr. Penrose raised his eyes in approbation, Lord Carberry smiled contemptuously, and Dr. Moreland gazed with exultation on his pupil. "What a pity it is," said the quaker, drily, "that all those beings whom the world could not miss, and who are unable to

give a good account of themselves, are not compelled to bear his Majesty's arms:—they would save the lives of many a better man; for an *honest* shoe-black, at any rate, is preferable to a *swindling* lord.” “ You are quite *scurrilous*,” said Carberry, with an effort at indifference: “ where, pray, would be our boasted freedom if the sons of nobility were exposed to such indignities?” “ If right honourables are to ~~be~~ excluded,” resumed Mr. Penrose, “ let them carry their passports in their pockets—thee, for instance, for any one to look at thy dress, would take thee for a *groom* rather than a *British peer*.” “ 'Tis clear, then, we don't always carry in appearance what we really are,” retorted the earl. “ More's the pity,” said Mr. Penrose, “ for then the unwary would know how to guard against thee.” “ And pray may I ask,” said his lordship, “ with an air of gaiety, “ how

long you have assumed the privilege of saying what you please?" "Ever since thee and thy associates have assumed the privilege of acting as ye please," replied the quaker. "Nay, there you are wrong, Mr. Penrose," rejoined Carberry, "that is a delightful prerogative we do not enjoy; if we did," and his eyes glanced towards Antonia, "who on earth would be so happy as myself?" "Happy!" repeated Penrose, in accents of incredulity, "vain man! thee knowest not what thee sayest." "Happiness," remarked Dr. Moreland, "is intellectual, and awaits not time or circumstances——" "Heaven knows it does not," interrupted the marquis, starting from his chair: "happiness evades the grasp of the licentious and ever mocks the designing; its soil must be purity—its air innocence—its existence contentment—it must be felt but not seen, for then would it awaken envy, malice,

and revenge. Oh! once I thought I possessed it, once the world could I have challenged to have produced a being so blest. But sorrow came—affliction threatened, and—” His eyes met Antonia’s, directed steadfastly towards him; he paused, he trembled for the incaution he had betrayed, and turning to the window inquired how long Mr. Penrose had been a resident at Cheltenham? “The situation is delightful,” he continued, “the air pure, and the complexion of Selina already evinces its salubrity.” All present perceived the source of the inquiry, all pitied the anguish they could not trace, and with a delicacy consonant to good breeding the subterfuge was allowed to pass, and wonder sunk into conjecture.

Early in the following week the marquis, with every acknowledgment for the kindness and attention which Mr. Penrose and Mahala had evinced

towards the invalid, called to conduct the young friends to the Grange. Painful was the mandate! Mahala hung round the neck of Antonia, while Lady Selina kissed the time-beaten cheek of the humane quaker. "Farewell, my little girls!" said Mr. Penrose, as they entered the carriage. "Though ye are about to mingle with the fashionable world I need not tell ye sometimes to think of, and sometimes to visit Cheltenham." "When I forget your kindness and the kindness of your tender Mahala," exclaimed Antonia, as she fervently pressed his hand, "may the stigma of ingratitude and the pang of remorse pursue me!" "I believe thee," resumed the quaker; "and for thy sake," turning to Lady Selina, "I will affirm that example does not always corrupt, for thy heart is as soft as though thou had'st been brought up in a cottage exposed to penury or pursued by affliction. Fare-

well ! and if ever my bluntness offends, think of my motive and pardon me."

Lady Selina, gratified at the encomiums of her new friend, smiled her thanks, and the carriage drove off.

"Friendship," said the marquis, in solemn accents, taking a hand and gazing alternately at each, "is a balm to the wounded heart—the first best gift to man: its soil is not prosperity, ah no ! in adversity it flourishes, in adversity its source may be traced—its tears are like the drops from heaven upon the parched face of the earth. You have expressed it for each other ; persevere in the same tract ; be ever as now united, my ward—my daughter—" His voice faltered, tears sprung to his eyes. "Selina, Antonia, both, both, my children !" "Sister !" articulated Selina, pressing her lips to the soft cheeks of Antonia. "By adoption, by love," faintly murmured the marquis—"sisters," and he drew them

wards her and seizing her hand. "Yet still is that lovely cheek pale," he continued, in a low voice—"still does the lily triumph. Oh, envious and malignant stars! to pluck the rose from so sweet a bower." Antonia coolly bowing withdrew her hand, and turned to answer the inquiries of the marchioness and Lady Geraldine, while the earl undaunted retained his station at her side, and with the most fervent admiration gazed upon her. "Why, Carberry, have you forgot the game?" exclaimed Lord Westbrook. "Pon my soul, if I was the countess I would not long be a resident of Bristol!" "His gallantry must slumber ere he can renew the attack," said the Duchess of Delaware, glancing at Antonia. "Then perish the honour of victory!" replied Westbrook, "for thus surrounded by youth, grace, and beauty, who can command attention?" A fascinating smile illumined the lovely

features of the duchess; with a well assumed air of modest diffidence her eyes bent beneath his, and a ready sigh swelled her snowy bosom. "Happy, happy Delaware!" whispered the viscount: "envied chosen being! to possess the divine, the soul-entrancing Laura for a wife." The duchess suffered him to retain her hand, and as he ardently pressed it, turned on him a look expressive of languid melancholy, and again breathed forth a sigh. "May I encourage the deluder Hope?" he softly resumed—"May I believe her whispers?—May I——" he paused. For some moments her grace awaited the conclusion of his speech, but finding him continue silent exclaimed, in a tone of inquiry—"Well, proceed, I am all attention; say, what may you?" "May I hope," rejoined Westbrook, "that the hand, not the heart, is shackled? May I hope that Delaware is not an object of envy?" "Nay,"

said the duchess, fearful of drawing attention, "Hope is not circumscribed. Come," she continued, striking the ball, "now I will enter the list which Carberry has deserted." "Ah! how is old broad brim?" inquired Sunderland, throwing Hoyle upon the table, and appearing for the first time to notice the arrival of Lady Selina and Antonia. "How is guardy and his daughter little primitive?" "If you mean Mr. and Miss Penrose, Mr. Sunderland," replied Lady Selina, "a more respectful appellation is requisite." "Nay, not a jot," answered Sunderland: "your ladyship must pardon me, but where respect is banished on one side I see no necessity for maintaining it on the other; and the marchioness, Lady Geraldine, Lord Carberry, Mr. Dauverne, Colonel Arkerman, and Captain Glendenning have witnessed the *respect* he has shewn to your most obedient servant." "O

the savage!" exclaimed Lady Geraldine. "Positively, I'd rather live in a land of Hottentots than in such a family." "His respect is to *actions*, not to *persons*, I allow," remarked her sister. "Bless me, Selina! will you turn quaker?" ironically questioned Lady Geraldine. "Why, what, in the name of all that's extravagant, have they put into your head? Do, for mercy's sake, when the *spirit moves*, hold forth in another room, for I detest preaching." "Mr. Penrose is one of those eccentric characters," observed Dauverne, "whose goodness of heart robs even his candour of rudeness; for the very man who excites the lash of his severity may feel, but cannot resent." "His age and his sect are passports," exclaimed Arkerman. "The undaunted strength of virtue," timidly remarked Antonia, "requires no passport." "Why, sure it is epidemic," rejoined Lady Geraldine. "Hea-

ven preserve me from the infection ! When will the trappings of vanity be exploded, and the unornamented garments of simplicity assumed ? Say," drawling affectedly, " when wilt *thee* renounce the evil one and forswear the workings of darkness ?" An indignant blush suffused the countenance of Antonia, while Lady Selina, with becoming spirit, retorted, " When you learn to respect charity, to signalize merit, and to decry vice." Sunderland caught her eye, raised his quizzing glass, and examined a group of statues in the corner. " One would think," said the marchioness, smiling, with an air of self-importance, " that *Cuin*, and not *Mahala*, had been your companion for the last week. Miss Forrester, who knows not the tie, may be excused, but for you, Selina, so warmly to defend the untaught being who publicly insulted your mother appears both inexplicable and unfeeling." " *Unfeel-*

ing!" repeated Selina, gazing at the tears which trembled in the eyes of Antonia—"Unfeeling!"—She remembered it was her mother, and that remembrance checked the warm impulse of her heart.

Dauverne looked at Antonia with an emotion he could scarcely repress, with an emotion which internally depreciated the being who had so cruelly sported with her feelings—who had called to memory a parent destiny had never permitted her to know. While Lord Carberry, with increasing admiration, whispered—"Charming sensibility! had a man called forth those tears his life should have answered the outrage." "There, there, my Lord," exclaimed the Duchess of Delaware, throwing the mace on the table, "you have won the game—I acknowledge myself vanquished; and what can you wish for more?" "The privilege of a conqueror," replied Westbrook,

raising her soft white hand to his lips, "and that which surpasses even the delight of victory, the praise of beauty, and the smile of love." "Fie, fie, encroacher!" resumed her grace, with an air of playful vivacity. "Will you never learn to be satisfied?" "Not while the divine Laura retains the power of fascinating," whispered the viscount. "Go, go," pushing him gaily from her, "you are a flatterer, a perfect destroyer of all female humility." "Nay, your grace must blame the hand of nature which made you so faultless," rejoined Westbrook. "For pity's sake let us return to the card-room," said the duchess, addressing Lady Geraldine, "there we may kill the enemy, but here it is so intolerably stupid that positively," affectedly yawning, "I shall go to sleep." "*Fine feelings* and newly gleaned *morality*," replied Lady Geraldine, satirically glancing at her

sister and Antonia, "have indeed o'er-shadowed the party:—for my part I detest such displays of *refinement* and *overrighteousness*." "I believe you," said Dauverne, gravely: "it is too much the practice to depreciate the excellence not possessed." "And to praise that which is, Mr. Cynic," ironically remarked Lady Geraldine; "well, of all sins, hypocrisy is not on my list." "I must do you the justice to allow it is not," rejoined Dauverne, "for your ladyship certainly shines forth in *your own* character." "Why, actually, I should have guessed you to have worn the trammels of Hymen at least a month," exclaimed the duchess, laughing: "I never saw a pair of lovers speak so undisguisedly and act so plainly in the whole of my experience. 'Tis enough to raise dissention in the state, for what lord of the creation will submit to the caprices of a fair tyrant when plain speaking and

plain dealing will bring him to the self-same point? Oh, Geraldine! silly, silly Geraldine! so easily to resign the boasted prerogative of our sex." "Oh! we agree monstrously well," answered Lady Geraldine, "don't we, cousin?" nodding significantly to Dauverne. "We know each other's *minds*, and the value set upon each other's *safety*, and that, let me tell you, is more than every pair can affirm." "Come, to drown all discord let us to cards," resumed her grace: "we may make two tables, and that is security for each party." "No, we cannot," rejoined her ladyship; "Quakers never play, and there are three *nays* and *yeas* in the company." "Surely, to oblige the charming mistress of the revels, for one evening *quakerism* may be banished," said Sunderland. "Try your influence, then," resumed Lady Geraldine; "in *that* quarter, mine is of no effect." "Why is the innocent amusement of

cards prohibited?" questioned Sunderland, approaching Lady Selina and Antonia. "Why will not quakers play?" "Because," replied Lady Selina, archly, "they have more wit than to squander their time and lose their money." "But you are not quakers," rejoined the beau. "Nor card players," retorted her ladyship. Sunderland, chagrined, forced a laugh, and returned from whence he came. "Perhaps," said the Duchess of Delaware, placing her hand on the arm of Dauverne, "you will join us at loo." "Excuse me," bowing, "it is a game I never play." "Nay then," resumed the siren, "you will be my partner at whist." "Your grace must pardon my declining that honour." "What will you play then?" said the duchess, with a smile of the most inviting sweetness. "Cross questions and crooked answers," sarcastically interrupted Lady Geraldine. "Then it must be

with your ladyship," said Dauverne, retreating towards the window, at which Lady Selina, Antonia, Lord Carberry, and Glendenning were stationed. "I have been engaged in a hard fought battle, and owe my security to flight," he continued, addressing Antonia: "but, I fear, I am not come off with much *eclat*," laughing, "for, in the opinion of her grace, I have forfeited all pretensions to gallantry." The earl and Captain Glendenning were now compelled reluctantly to join the card players, and Dauverne led the young friends to the music saloons.

CHAP. VI.

"WHAT a silly bauble to contain so strong a spell!" exclaimed the Duchess of Delaware, twirling her wedding ring upon the breakfast table. "Heigh ho! 'tis a fair type, for it is round and round, and endless as the plagues of matrimony." "Mercy defend us!" said Lady Geraldine; "why, what a picture! disheartening, cheerless, the foe to mirth and the grave of happiness." "Ah, my dear! you will think so," interrupted her grace, with an affected sigh, "when you have worn it as long as I have." The marchioness laughed; while Lady Selina and Antonia, exchanged looks of disapprobation and surprise. "What shall I do with the magic spell?"

asked Lord Westbrook, snatching the ring and holding it as if doubtful between his thumb and finger. "Lay it in the Red Sea," replied the duchess; "and when I summon it thence, may the whole legion of turbulent spirits attend it!" "And the duke?" questioned Lady Selina. "Oh, the giver with the gift of course!" said the duchess, laughing. "If all incumbrances could be placed there," observed Dauverne, "there would scarce be room for his Grace of Delaware." "Oh, yes, there would!" significantly replied Lady Geraldine, and for *one more* I hope." "This is a new place for depositing partners, Miss Forrester," said Dauverne, regardless of the insinuation; "but remember, it is only selected by the oligarchy of fashion." "Well, but what shall I do with this odious, detestable, frightful badge of bondage?" again asked the viscount. "Give it to me,"

said the duchess, extending her hand, "for I *must* wear it." "Then, I swear I will put it on," exclaimed Westbrook. "Lord! what a wedding ring," lisped the duchess, looking as though she would have blushed, had not her already blooming complexion refused heightening. "Upon a *wedded* finger," remarked Lady Selina. Her grace heard not, or appeared not to hear the observation, and folded her round white arms in token of resistance. "'Tis all in vain," said Westbrook, gaily, "I have sworn and will replace it." "Well, you obstinate self-willed animal, I suppose you must." "With this ring," exclaimed the viscount, drawing it on her finger, "I thee wed—with—" "Hush, hush, for heaven's sake!" shrieked the duchess, placing her hand upon his lips; "be silent, don't bring to mind what I wish ever to forget."

He kissed the apparently reluctant

hand, and was about to answer, when the entrance of a servant with two letters on a salver, checked the discourse. "What, for me? Alas, poor Delaware!" looking at the direction, "Some new complaint," and she threw it unopened on the table. The other was for Lady Selina; her eyes sparkled with delight. "Ah! from the Countess of Carberry," she exclaimed, starting from her chair, and precipitately quitting the apartment. "Now for the tender and pathetic," said Lady Geraldine; "the soft reproaches and heart-rending murmurs of a forsaken heroine. Oh, that the truant would return to these arms!" she continued, with an air of tragic mimicry—"oh, that he would take compassion on the bursting agony of this faithful bosom! For then, and not till then, my friend, my Selina, tender confidant of my sorrows, can peace, comfort or repose, be felt by your be-

reaved, your half-distracted Cecilia Carberry." "How very moving!" said the duchess, laughing. "Do, dear Lady Geraldine, write a novel; it would have an amazing run: call it the *Force of Sentiment*; or, the *Fumidity of Love*—and make the sweet Cecilia heroine." "And who shall be the hero?" inquired Westbrook. "Expect not that honour," said the duchess, with a fascinating smile; "you are too constant!" "Nay, think not I covet it," replied the viscount, gallantly bowing, "unless *Cecilia* can be changed to *Laura*." "What, with the same title?" questioned Lady Geraldine. "No, no; if you comply with my terms," resumed Westbrook, "your ladyship must style it the *Force of Beauty*; or the *Reward of Constancy*." "Ah! what you have an eye to the Red Sea," archly rejoined Lady Geraldine: "take care your lordship leads not the same dance; for I prophesy,

six months passes not before *bathing* is recommended for your constitution."

"Add pray what punishment shall be awarded to a false prophetess?" asked the half-angry duchess. "Nay, that shall depend on your grace's *gentle* nature," replied her ladyship, satirically.—"Is not the Countess of Carberry at Falmouth?" inquired Dauverne. "Yes, like a dutiful daughter," said her ladyship, "she is attending her mamma; and wearing the willow for her truant mate." "She has a heart," reproachfully resumed Dauverne, "which acutely feels what she can never show—unkindness." "Perhaps, she possesses not the spirit," remarked the Duchess of Delaware. "I remember her well, before Carberry was seized with cupid's mania, when she was an unaffected pretty blushing girl, proud of notice and smiling at controul. But no sooner did she become a countess, than

there was such a display of virtue and delicacy, such affectation, and such insufferable folly! Lord! I don't wonder Carberry was sickened to death—it was, “If you please my love—or, “Just as you like”—or, Indeed, Carberry, I know no will but your's”—or, I am much obliged to your grace, but cannot answer until I have consulted the earl.—In short, the turtles were laughed at, and his lordship fairly shamed out of his bondage.” “What then, in the ideas of your grace, may be the path a couple ought to pursue?” questioned Dauverne. Antonia expectantly awaited the solution, and the duchess answered,—“That in which they mean to persevere—for instance, if Carberry and his bride had begun like other people, they might now have pursued the same tract, and have maintained in the eyes of the world an appearance of affection; or at any rate civility;

but the one was inconstant and the other proud: the men because she is pretty condemn the earl; and, therefore, in mercy 'tis natural the women should take his part. Poor thing! she can't help it though—it runs in the family—there's her high-spirited brother, proud as Lucifer! I remember, once condescending to interest myself about him: pure friendship must have been my motive, for——” “*Hum,*” interrupted Lady Geraldine, “Captain Powersly is one of the handsomest men in England.” “Do you think so?” drawled out the duchess. “Well, beauty is a matter of opinion,” and she stole a side-long glance at Lord Westbrook. “I know nothing so variable as *opinton*,” rejoined Lady Geraldine, significantly. “Well,” resumed her grace, with forced indifference, “I recommended him to Lord —, and when his lordship merely

in conformity to my request, took an opportunity of offering his protection, I shall never forget the air of dignity he assumed—if he had been son to the Duke of Delaware instead of Captain Powersly, he could not have shewn more consequence. ‘I thank your lordship,’ he exclaimed: ‘I wish for friends, but I never seek *protectors*.’ ‘Why then, my high-spirited young man,’ said a by-stander, ‘you will never find *them*; for in this great world, I know no one thing which requires *more* seeking.” “What ingratitude! what a return for favour!” said Lady Geraldine, smiling. “I suppose, at any rate, this was a damper to your proffered service.

The duchess took up the letter she had so long discarded, and humming a tune broke the seal; while Dauverne, well acquainted with the anecdote once whispered in the circles of fashion, and disgusted at her duplicity,

and her confidence, quitted the room. "Well, as I supposed," said the duchess, laughing: "most dolorous indeed! written in all the eloquence of love, and pathetically deploring my absence. Only listen to the contrast between Carberry and my *cara sposa*" — Eager to remove the anxiety of my lovely Laura—"Well, his grace has discernment, however," remarked Westbrook. The duchess smiled and proceeded—"I disobey the injunctions of my physicians; and steal in spite of the listless languor of disease, a few moments, to pour forth my regret at our separation. Yes, my beloved, my tender wife, from your soft hand would the bitter draught of medicine become sweetened! from your commiseration would the fever of pain be less acute! and the head now aching, languid and heavy, if resting on your bosom would lose half its sorrows! You plead our children—surely that

plea will cease to exist, when I tell you they may be always with you; me you can have but a short time longer. Oh, Laura! let not then an envious letter rob my mind of its pictured happiness; but let me see you, as an angel of charity, hastening to Beddingfield House, and pouring the sweet balm of affection into the bosom of your suffering husband, --- Delaware."

"Gracious heaven! can you hesitate?" inquired Antonia, chasing away the tears which trembled in her eyes. "No, not a moment," said the duchess, with affected gravity. "You leave us then—you attend the call of duty," resumed Antonia, looking at her with more complacency—"you fly to perform the pleasing office of consoler—you—" "Hush, hush, my pretty mentor!" interrupted her grace, "or really I shall imbibe the suspicions of Lady Geraldine re-



specting this Cheltenham trip. Why can you in reason suppose I would resign my visit to St. Antholine's, merely to conform to an old man's caprices?—can you suppose I would relinquish the pleasure of witnessing my friend's martyrdom? Bless me, Miss Forrester! what is the matter?—How pale you look! One would imagine that you were going to be married instead of Lady Geraldine."

Antonia started; a tell-tale blush crimsoned her cheek; and her eyes sought the ground. "The defect is soon removed," continued the duchess, smiling significantly to Lord Westbrook: "why you have now as pretty a bloom as ever adorned the features of beauty." "Possibly, Miss Forrester blushes for your grace," said Lady Selina, who had entered in time to hear and see the animadversion. "Of what could you be thinking?" resumed the duchess, regardless of this reproof.

"I was thinking," faintly articulated Antonia, "of the disappointment of the duke." "Then, do pray, my sweet philanthropist," said her grace, laughing, "volunteer *the pleasing office of consoler*; and hasten on the pinions of commiseration to poor Delaware." "And say," rejoined Lady Selina, with marked emphasis, "that *pity* takes you to perform the task a *fashionable* wife declines." "Nay, say what you please," replied the duchess, turning with a contemptuous smile to the window. "Why don't you answer your letter?" inquired Lady Geraldine, throwing aside a new novel she had been perusing. "Remember we have promised Sunderland to take a long ride." "True," she replied, "but first of all," ringing the bell, "I want credentials." A writing desk was instantly brought, and her grace in a musing attitude seated herself at

the table. "Let me see, what can I say?" "Oh! any thing, any thing," repeated Lady Geraldine; only pray, be quick." "Tell him you've fallen down stairs and broke your leg," said Westbrook, laughing; "or, that you've had an alarming fever and dare not quit your apartment; or——" "Pshaw!" interrupted Lady Selina, "tell him the truth at once—tell him that nursing a sick husband is worse than the plagues of Egypt." "Mine's the best head at invention after all," said the Duchess. "I'll tell him," writing, "that our beloved boy, the Marquis of Beddingfield, is confined with the measles; and that the soul of his Laura is divided between a suffering cherub and an absent husband.—That even the converse of letter, the softener of absence is denied me; for that my head aches from a too close attendance in a sick-room; and that

my spirits are so depressed, as only to permit of my adding the name of his faithful dejected, Laura Delaware." "Bravo bravo!" exclaimed Westbrook. "'Pon my soul, your grace excels in every thing!"—"Save humanity," thought Antonia.

The letter was conveyed to the post, and the amusements of the day passed unclouded. A few days previous to their quitting the Grange, Lady Selina and Antonia visited Cheltenham. They found Mr. Penrose and Mahala at home, who received them with their usual affection. "This is kind!" said the good man, shaking them heartily by the hand. "It is not half an hour ago since we were speaking of our young favourites." Antonia traced in the countenance of the fair quaker a more than ordinary animation; and in compliance with the speaking expression of her eye, quitted the room and accompanied her into the garden.

"Charles Powersly will shortly return from his cruize," said the delighted girl—never, never, was I so happy. This morning I received a letter, in which he tells me," and a mantling blush tinged her lovely features, "that all reserve must be banished; that he shall openly address my father, and demand me for his bride." She paused—she threw her arms around the neck of Antonia, and gazing fearfully on her,—“Yet should he refuse his sanction,” she continued; “should he bid me cease to love him, I shall surely die.” “You mean then to yield implicit obedience to your father’s wishes?” questioned Antonia. Mahala replied not. “You will even resign Captain Powersly, should the sacrifice be required?” Still was Mahala silent—her hand was spread over her face; and Antonia saw the tears trickle through her fingers. “Does your silence imply concur-

rence?" she again importuned—"Say, will love submit to duty?" "Oh, no, no, no!" articulated Mahala, grasping the arm of her friend. "I see but one barrier, my dear girl," said Antonia, affectionately pressing her hand. "And what is that?" she eagerly questioned. "Religion." "True; but can I not be as good in such a dress as thee hast on as in this dark silk; or this unadorned cap? And as for the difference of faith, it all leads to one and the same end; for if we act uprightly, and do ever as we would be done by, what matter whether we be Quaker or Protestant?" "Indeed, I am decidedly of your opinion," replied Antonia; "and doubt not, but Mr. Penrose is too disinterested, and too liberal to sacrifice the happiness of his child." Mahala again smiled, for—"In early youth the heart of every one is a poet, it creates a scene of fancied happiness and delusive hopes, it

clothes the world in the bright colours of its own fancy, it refines what is coarse, it exalts what is mean, it sees nothing but disinterestedness in friendship, it promises eternal fidelity in love; even on the distresses of its situation, it can throw a certain romantic shade of melancholy, that leaves a man sad, but does not make him unhappy."

The day previous to their leaving Warwickshire, our heroine passed at the vicarage. Dr. Moreland, confirmed in the suspicions he had often formed, by witnessing the distress and agitation of Dauverne, when he acquainted him of Antonia's accident, wished to warn her heart of its danger—to rouse it from the slumber of inanity, and awaken it to fortitude—to point out the wreck of peace arising from misplaced affection—to call forth her delicacy as a guard over her emotions; and if possible, turn aside the barbed

arrow which threatened her repose. His dependence on his pupil was unshaken: well acquainted with his principles, he felt he could stake his existence on the virtue, prudence, and propriety of his conduct; yet hourly to behold the woman he loved—to gaze on the contrast of innate innocence, purity, and loveliness, with the unthinking, fashionable levity of his wife, was it in nature to refrain murmuring? was it in nature to retain his steady, persevering, unadulterated sentiments? Dr. Moreland trembled as he pursued the flights of imagination, and determined more than ever, ere he bid adieu to Antonia, to name his suspicions—to hint her danger.

In the evening, as was predetermined, Mrs. Moreland quitted the room with the children: Antonia arose to follow; but the doctor took her hand. “You leave us to-morrow,” he said, leading her to her chair. Antonia

mournfully bowed. A pensive melancholy, blended with dignity and sweetness, o'ershadowed her features, and stamped them with more than usual interest. "You go to mix in a scene of gaiety, in what the world denominates pleasure," he continued ; " and before we again meet," and he fixed his eyes with penetrating earnestness upon her face, " the long-talked-of marriage between Dauverne and Lady Geraldine will have taken place." A sickening spasm seized her heart : a passing glow tinged her cheek, and vanished—" like the lightning, which doth cease to be ere one can say it lightens." " The bride, if she chooses, may be happy," pursued the doctor, apparently regardless of her emotion : " with every grace of mind, Providence has gifted Dauverne with a heart as faultless as his person ; with an excellence of character, which from religion receives its brightest tint. To be blind to his

merit is impossible ; but, as the husband of Lady Geraldine, the heart of innocence must be steeled against his perfections."

Antonia started. Pale as the mountain lily, she crossed her hands upon her bosom, while her whole form trembled with fearful emotion. Dr. Moreland paused : he pitied the feelings he had awakened ; yet was it a painful task which duty urged him to fulfil. He took her hand ; he affectionately pressed it. " Pardon me," and again he hesitated—" the secrets of the soul," he continued, after a pause, " are often legible in the countenance. I have seen what, had Dauverne been disengaged, I should have gloried in discovering. Nay, turn not away : remember your inquisitor is your friend : remember you may even call him father. Divest yourself of fear ; for that is the offspring of impropriety ; and of that not even the

tongue of envy can accuse you. You are kindred minds: your souls are animated by the same sentiments, the same ideas, the same virtues; and your hearts—forgive me, my young friend; think not I wish to wound your delicacy—are alive to the same sensations.”

“ Oh, no !” eagerly exclaimed Antonia, regardless of what she said, and a momentary ray of delight danced in her eyes at the bare possibility—“ he avoids—he carefully shuns me.” “ And would a knowledge of his love give you pleasure ?” questioned the doctor. Antonia trembled : she could not answer. “ Do not deceive yourself, my dear girl,” resumed her kind friend; “ do not rely too implicitly on your own firmness : remember your peace is threatened : be guarded, be vigilant : avoid his society ; never let him see that he has excited in your bosom an interest greater than esteem : never let

him know, that honour is the only barrier ; and when you see him the husband of Lady Geraldine——”

Antonia shuddered. “ I will petition the marquis,” she articulated, in a voice scarcely audible, “ to permit my return to Italy. In the solitude of St. Eustacia, I will deplore my short sad sojournment in the world : there I will think of my friends, and pray for their happiness.” A burst of tears checked utterance, and, leaning back on her chair, she hid her face in her hands. “ I fear you are offended ; I fear your pride is hurt ; I fear my interest in your welfare has carried me farther than I intended,” said the doctor. “ Oh, no, no !” murmured Antonia, extending her hand—“ My feelings, not my pride, are wounded. I have betrayed my weakness to the world—am despised by my friends—and degraded in my own opinion.”

Long was it ere he could soothe her

agitation: long was it ere he could reason her into composure; and after they had rejoined Mrs. Moreland and the children, the smile which their remarks frequently excited was quickly succeeded by a tear. It was past eight when Antonia took leave of the inhabitants of the vicarage: Mrs. Moreland kissed her with maternal affection, and the children wept as they hung round her neck: she mingled her tears with theirs, for she regretted, in the absence of their excellent parents, not only friends but counsellors.

“Farewel!” she articulated, as she hurried through the garden; and, when she entered the park, paused to regain composure. “You feel this separation too acutely,” said the doctor, assuming an air of cheerfulness far foreign to his heart: “trust me, we shall yet meet to smile at all difficulties.”

The approach of the Marquis of Al-
 lington prevented a reply: she fer-
 vently pressed the hand of the good
 divine, and chased from her glowing
 cheek the truant tear. The mar-
 quis raised his eyes from the
 ground, started, and would again have
 plunged into the obscurity of the
 woods, could he have escaped obser-
 vation: but Dr. Moreland had already
 taken off his hat; and returning his
 salutation, he inquired after his fa-
 mily, and then addressed Antonia.
 "Are you bound for the Grange, Miss
 Forrester? or will you join my soli-
 tary ramble, and suffer me to take the
 place of escort from your companion?"
 "It is too pleasing a situation to be
 resigned, my Lord," said the doctor,
 smiling. "Nay, that speech would
 have done a dozen years ago, my good
 friend," replied the marquis, with a
 momentary effort at cheerfulness; "but
 it sounds ill from the lips of a married

man. Go you to your amiable wife and lovely children, and I will take charge of our little *eleos*."

As he spoke, he drew her arm through his; and the doctor, wishing them good night, departed. Instantly his countenance resumed its native sadness: he fixed his eyes on Antonia, and perceiving her's red and swollen with weeping, inquired why she encouraged a dejection so little according with her years. "Youth is the period for cheerfulness," he continued: "it is, as the cloudless sun, invigorating and salutary: not a sorrow—not an affliction—not a calamity has shocked your feelings; why then does this veil of pensiveness overshadow your features? Why do you yield to corroding melancholy, which time makes habitual?" "It is the offering of gratitude to affection and worth," mildly replied Antonio; "but a few moments ago, my Lord, I parted from the inmates of

the vicarage." "True," he rejoined, gazing mournfully on her; "you weep a casual, I an eternal separation. You weep the scenes you leave behind, I the scenes I am about to visit. Soon shall I linger near the spot which witnessed my chief happiness, my bitterest sorrow—the spot which contains——" He stopped; he raised his eyes to heaven: a more than usual paleness o'er-spread his countenance, and large and scalding tears rolled down his cheeks. "You are ill, my Lord!" articulated Antonia, terrified at his agitation. "You trifle with an existence, valuable to your family, and to the world." "But not to its possessor," murmured the marquis: "memory poisons it, Miss Forrester, and robs it of its worth." "Yet we cannot throw it aside," said Antonia, fearfully: "it is the gift of an omniscient God; and to slight the benefaction is to displease the benefactor. Suffer me then to hint

my fears for your health : suffer me to recommend your having recourse to a physician." " A physician !" repeated the marquis, with a ghastly smile. " Poor girl ! A physician ! Say, can he

" ——— minister to a mind diseas'd ;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain :
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart ?"

Antonia trembled : her fears for the sanity of his mind increased ; and so strong is the delusive power of fancy, that, as she gazed upon him, she could almost discover the start of madness, and the wild terrific stare of frenzy. They had penetrated into the thickest part of the wood ; and the gloom of the evening hour, joined to the deep shadow of the trees, spread o'er all around the sickly hue of melancholy. " Do not fear me, Antonia," said the

marquis, faintly smiling at the terrors which her countenance betrayed—
 “trust me, you are safe: for even were I insane, you wear a form that would protect you.”

Again Antonia took his arm, and in silence they proceeded. Suddenly they stopped; for voices, at no great distance, reached their ears. The marquis, to avoid intrusion, turned to seek another path, when curiosity impelled him to remain; for, in accents of distress, he heard distinctly articulated—“Oh, what will become of me! To-morrow you go—to-morrow I shall see you no more. Cruel, cruel man! You found me innocent and happy: you found me the comfort of my father’s age: you leave me fallen and miserable: you leave me his bitterest curse, his bitterest sorrow. Scorn will add insult to my disgrace: my companions will deride, my friends will forsake me: for soon must my situa-

tion be perceptible to the world. Oh, wretch, wretch ! to forget the precepts of my father—to suffer my foolish heart to listen to a being so much my superior—to——”

Her voice was drowned by the sobs of anguish which succeeded. “ Do not weep, my sweet complainer,” said her companion, endeavouring to sooth her : “ ever will I remain your friend : ever will you find me grateful for your tenderness. Think of my promises ; retain but the secret of my name, and bind me an eternal slave to your beauty. In less than three months, we will fly to London, and defy the malice of village-gossip. I will introduce you to a set who are above the silly prejudices you have been taught to honour. You shall reign mistress of a house, of servants, of a carriage——”

“ And my father,” interrupted the poor deluded victim——“ what will become of my father ?” “ He shall live

like a prince," rejoined the seducer—
 " he shall not want for any thing ; for
 you shall deck his habitation with gifts,
 and his heart shall rejoice through his
 child's bounty." " Ob, no, no !" mur-
 mured the unhappy girl : " you know
 not my father ! He is poor, but he is
 honest : sooner would he starve, sooner
 would he die, than accept the wages
 of his daughter's dishonour." " Why
 then we must leave him to his obdu-
 racy, to his——" " Despair !" inter-
 rupted the sufferer, burning into a
 fresh flood of sorrow. " Poor girl !"
 murmured Antonia. " Cursed be the
 destroyer of innocence !" exclaimed the
 marquis, in a voice rather loud and
 threatening. " Cursed be the dis-
 spiller, who plunges in the wound of his
 magnanimity the thorn of sorrow and
 contumacy. Cursed be the man who
 do——"

He passed a burning glare in
 looking at the countess, and then

steps, succeeded. The marquis and Antonia pressed through the intervening branches, and beheld, leaning against a tree, pale, trembling, panting, Mary, the daughter of old William. "Mary!" exclaimed Antonia, in a voice of amazement and horror. Mary answered by a second shriek, and hid her burning face in her hands. "Unhappy girl!" said the marquis, in sympathizing accents. "Name the villain who has murdered your peace—who has robbed your soul of its repose—who, fearful of detection, has left you to stand the brunt of inquiry, and basely, cowardly, fled."

"Never, never!" articulated Mary: "though I should die—though my incensed parent should spurn me, loathe me, hate me, yet will I not betray him. Alone will I bear the load of infamy, and suffer unrepining, to save his name from censure." "He deserves not your forbearance," said the marquis,

sternly; "give him up, young woman," to the reproach he merits, and declare the arts he practised to betray you." Still Mary was silent: still did she cling to the tree; and still did her tears flow unceasing.

[illegible]

torture, bind the broken reed? Will it restore self-approbation? will it silence the stings of conscience? will it heal a heart bowed down by the conviction of error? Oh no! The grave, that deep, that silent receptacle, can alone bury all—can alone wipe from the sensitive tablet of virtue, the venal trespasses of humanity.”

“ Yet what can be done for this poor unfortunate?” questioned Antonia. “ Though she refuses to name her betrayer, yet can we not leave her to her fate.” Mary turned on Antonia a look of grateful import, and again bent her eyes to the ground. “ Forbid it mercy! forbid it justice!” exclaimed the marquis. “ Many a deluded girl is, by the mistaken hand of severity, plunged into the abyss of destruction! Many who nightly infest the streets of the metropolis, who lose the dignity of the sex in their own conduct might, had they been upheld

on a first transgression—had they been treated with lenity and counselled with tenderness, have regained the path from which they had incautiously strayed—have obliterated the one fatal error by a perseverance in uniform propriety. Where did you first behold your seducer?" he continued, addressing the distressed girl. "As I sat working at the door of our cottage," faltered Mary. "Did he converse with you?" "Yes." "Where then was your father?" "Gone to the village." "And you concealed the interview from his knowledge?" "I did." "Ah! there was the foundation of your misfortune: art ends in sorrow. Had you acquainted him with this illicit meeting he would have convinced you of its impropriety, have guarded you against its danger." Mary sighed. "Did he praise your beauty?" "He mentioned the matter." "Yes." "Did he say your manners would please a

palace?" "Yes." "Did he swear he loved you?" "Yes." "Did he call heaven to witness his vows?" "Yes." "And you believed him?" "Oh, yes, yes!" "Infamous, base, deliberate scoundrel!" Mary clasped her hands and sunk almost fainting at his feet. "It was I who erred," she murmured—"it was I who smiled on his advances. Ah, do not brand him with such epithets! He is a gentleman, my lord; he has sworn to protect me——" "As the wolf protects the lamb," interrupted the marquis. "And his honour," resumed Mary. "Talk not of his honour, poor deluded girl," he rejoined; "'tis built on a fabric too easily shaken. Return to your father's dwelling, and know me for your friend. To-morrow I leave Warwickshire: but ere I go I will recommend you to a being benevolent and compassionating, a being who will pity your wrongs, and, in spite of the

world's slander, extend her hand to uphold a fallen sister. Go, and may heaven assist and comfort you !”

She raised her tearful eyes—she ejaculated a blessing upon his name—snatched his hand, while her heart throbbed with gratitude, eagerly kissed it and hurried from them. “ To the care of Mrs. Moreland I will intrust this fair unfortunate,” said the marquis, after a pause ; “ she will sooth the pangs treachery hath inflicted, and her husband will kindly break to the paternal ear the fearful tale.” “ Poor William !” murmured Antonia, wiping away the tears which flowed at the anticipation of his anguish. “ The doctor will be surprised at a visit to-night,” resumed the marquis ; “ but as we quit the Garage early in the morning I think it is better not deferred.”

Antonia acquiesced in his opinion, and they retraced their steps to the

vicarage. Shocked, amazed, distressed the doctor and Mrs. Moreland listened to the recital : whom to suspect, or whom to condemn, was alike impossible : they could only mourn the weakness of the deluded Mary, pity the unfortunate William, and blame the unknown seducer. The heart of Mrs. Moreland sided with the wishes of the marquis, and before they again bid adieu she promised to befriend, uphold, and console the frail being whom the narrow policy of the world would else have abandoned to her own wretchedness.

“ Bless me ! Miss Forrester, have you seen a ghost ? ” inquired the Duchess of Delaware, as Antonia entered the drawing-room. “ Why you look as white as a sheet. ” “ You are indeed pale,” said Dauverne, and his voice softened to an anxious tenderness he could not restrain. “ You have removed the defect though, Mr. Dau-

verne," said the duchess, ironically. "Lest the fly should again triumph," exclaimed Lady Selina, "do your grace acquaint Miss Forrester where you purchase your *rouge*." A contemptuous smile curled the pouting lips of the duchess, and with playful vivacity she continued, addressing Antonia—"Do tell us where, and how, and in what form the spectre appeared?" "In a form little interesting to the heart of gaiety," said the marquis, solemnly: "it was the ghost of Innocence, hurled from her station by profligacy and vice." "Mercy!" exclaimed the marchioness, fearfully; "how strange! Have you really seen a ghost?" "Yes," resumed the marquis, "one which too often stalks the world—one which conveys a fatal prototype of woman's weakness and man's infamy." "Well, that accounts for the noise I heard in the picture gallery at midnight," said Lady Geraldine,

nodding significantly to the duchess in derision of her mother's weakness. "Geraldine," said the marquis, sternly, "your satire, in the present case, is unbecomingly pointed." "Well but my dear marquis," pursued the duchess, "do tell us what form the ghost of Innocence could possibly assume? for really it requires a poetic imagination to deck it." "A mirror will solve the query," replied the marquis. "Oh shocking! what my own resemblance?" shrieked the duchess. "'Pon my honour your lordship is very complaisant, most obligingly civil," and she bit her lip with vexation. "Pardon me, I meant to convey that the form was alike feminine—alike lovely," rejoined the marquis. "I know not what your lordship *meant to convey*," said her grace, haughtily; "but it is proper you now should *convey* what you *meant*." "Well then," continued the marquis, "I intended to hold the

mirror before any being possessing youth and beauty merely to reflect a representation of the form; as for the heart, may no individual here assembled ever be enabled to picture its sensations, for

“ Pity may mourn, but not restore,
And woman falls to rise no more.”

“ For any farther solution your grace must excuse me.” “ ’Tis a damsel betrayed and forsaken,” said Lady Geraldine, laughing; “ some pretty, round - faced, chubby tradesman’s daughter, or——” The marquis frowned. “ Indeed, my lord, I am the best in the world to keep a secret,” said the duchess, again condescending to implore; “ and positively, I am dying for the knowledge; you will find me charitable—you will find me a comforter, for I can make every allowance for woman’s frailty; I know,” in accents of mimic gravity,

"No mortal footing treads so firm in virtue,
As always to abide the slipp'ry path,
Nor deviate from the bias."

"To triumph is to fly the tempter,"
said the marquis, rising from his
chair:—"The conscious heart may
feel my allusion—the ear of curiosity
cannot be benefitted by the tale. Good
night!" and he quitted the apartment.

Antonia resisted every importunity
levelled by art or insinuation, and care-
fully treasuring the secret of Mary in
her bosom felt a relief when she ex-
changed the noisy mirth of the ban-
quetting room for the solitude of her
own chamber.

CHAP. VII.

THE wind whistled among the ivy, and the owlet hooted from the dilapidated cloisters as the carriage drove over the portcullis of St. Antholine's. High and heavy walls nearly surrounded it, and the hollow roar of the ocean, breaking sullenly against the chalky cliffs, added a contrast grand and awful to the light and modern elegance of the Grange. "This antique residence wants but the fertile imagery of fancy to restore its primeval splendour," said Lord Carberry, as he assisted Antonia in alighting. "Really, as we see the moon reflecting on the arches in this direction we may almost picture yon monumental tablet to be the pale form of a sister spirit, mourn-

ing its devastation." "I see no spirit but the spirit of melancholy," said the Duchess of Delaware. "Heaven knows it is a well-chosen spot for matrimony, for its aspect is clad in the dismals!"

Lady Geraldine laughed and passed on; while Antonia, wrapt in contemplation, almost fancied herself restored to St. Eustacia—almost fancied she heard the sacred harmony of the mellow pealed organ, rising in full swell with the plaintive voices of the holy sisters. "Hail, blessed sanctuary of peace!" she murmured, as her radiant eyes were fixed on heaven—"asylum to the unfortunate—security to the oppressed—balm to the wretched!" She perceived not that the party had departed; she remembered not that Italy was no longer her abiding place, until Lord Carberry, in a voice of tender softness, exclaimed—"Fancy it Udolpho, my lovely enthusiast, and substitute me a

Valencourt." Antonia started—she looked eagerly around, the delusive veil of fancy was withdrawn, and St. Antholine's, bold, bleak, irregular, stood before her. "Did he forswear his vows?" she innocently interrogated, not having read that much admired production. "Did he forget her he was bound to cherish, and lose his sense of duty in the pursuits of pleasure?" "No, no," answered Carberry; "he was the slave of no worldly form, he was unshackled, at liberty to choose, at liberty to proclaim to the universe her his heart had selected." "Where then is the similarity?" questioned Antonia, turning reproachfully away. "I see it not." "Too plain I see it, too plain I feel it," mournfully returned the earl: "Valencourt adored Emily—I adore Antonia."

She cast on him a look of offended pride, of indignant virtue, and moved

hastily towards the entrance, hurt at having so incautiously lingered behind the party, and thus exposed herself to insult.

“ Stay, stay, Miss Forrester,” he exclaimed: “ blame that peerless form, that peerless face—remember Paradise was lost by human frailty, and could I regain it, again should it be lost for you. Stay then, and hear me; you are——” “ What, my lord?” archly questioned Lady Selina, who had approached them unperceived. “ Most welcome!” said Antonia. “ Does your lordship join in the declaration?” resumed Lady Selina, extending to him her hand.

He could not reject the pledge; he forced a smile, but his cheek flushed scarlet, for a bracelet encircled her arm, whose clasp, within a halo of diamonds, contained the portrait of his countess. “ What think you of the likeness?” she continued—“ it is ap-

proved a striking one; and methinks the world is not incorrect, for, if, I may judge from the countenance, it has certainly *struck* you." Carberry bit his lips: he still held the hand, but turned his head aside. "Nay, don't let politeness subdue inclination," pursued her ladyship; "do examine the features.—I remember the time when you would have knelt down and worshipped this little image, when——" "Damn the image!" muttered Carberry, and then forced a laugh. "Oh man! fickle man!" rejoined Selina; "who shall say I have thee? who shall say thy faith is lasting? Like

"The moon, the inconstant moon,
That monthly changes in her circled orb,
—— Thy love proves —— variable."

"Faith, one would think your ladyship spoke from experience," said the earl. "Have you known what you so feelingly deplore?" "In theory

often," she replied; " in practice never. But here is one," and her eyes rested on the bracelet, " who could explain, could paint its sensations. You never saw the Countess of Carberry, Antonia; to-morrow we will ride to Falmouth and visit her. I must not let you see her picture, for you will find the original sadly changed. Once her complexion was as vivid as these colours—once her smile was as sweet, her features as cloudless.—Where is Lord Carberry?" looking around. " Gone," said Antonia; " you have frightened him; but proceed, I am interested." " I do not wonder at his departure," rejoined Selina; " if his heart is vulnerable I must have reached it.—Well, affliction, you know, like an untimely frost, nips the sweetest flowers and perishes the bud of beauty." " Ah!" ejaculated the Marquis of Allingthorn, who that moment passed them, " of whom

are you speaking?—what have you discovered?" "Discovered, my lord," said Antonia, faintly. "Discovered," repeated Lady Selina. "Girls, you echo my words," exclaimed the marquis. "Have you wandered from St. Antholina's?—have you seen——" "What, what, my father?" asked Lady Selina. "Nothing," he replied, with forced composure. "We are but just arrived," observed Antonia; "dark and alone, where could we wander?" "True, true, I had forgot," rejoined the marquis. "Go, leave me; I would not have my reflections broken upon—go, I say, I cannot bear this torture." "My father is strangely agitated to-night," sighed Selina, as they ascended the staircase.—"This old building always seems to depress his spirits, and yet he likes to visit it." "He is indeed," said Antonia: "heaven knows I pity him!" "Would I were worthy of his confidence!" said Selina,

wiping away a tear. "I think," and she lowered her voice to a whisper, "the disease lies in the mind, and not the body."

Antonia started; she remembered the scenes she had herself witnessed, and sighed in acquiescence. "Hush! hush!" resumed Lady Selina, as they passed the door of the library, "what a piercing groan!—Hark!" pausing, "he speaks; 'tis the voice of my father." "Forrester, accursed name!" they distinctly heard articulated. "Ah God! what pangs hath treachery inflicted! Where, where is the Lethean draught that can banish retrospection?" Antonia, almost convulsed, grasped the hand of her companion and dragged her forward. "Forrester!" exclaimed Lady Selina. "Forrester!" "For heaven's sake a little water!" murmured Antonia, while her bleached features plainly indicated the state of her feelings. Selina led her to an

opened window, and the fresh breeze restored her nearly suspended faculties. "I am quite well," she replied, to the anxious inquiries of her friend, and then breathed a sigh so piercing that Selina fearfully started. "Have you already ventured among the ruins?" asked Lady Geraldine, as they entered the drawing-room. "Sure, you are grown mighty courageous!" "Oh, 'tis delightful," remarked the Duchess of Delaware, "for two fair heroines to wander in search of adventures! Did the bat shriek from the clustering ivy?" turning to Antonia, "or the owl flap her wings from the cloisters?" "Possibly both," she replied, "though we were not there to hear them." "Well, I do think you merit a civic crown.—The plan you propose is excellent," said Lady Geraldine, addressing Sunderland. "With a little invention and taste the old chapel will make the prettiest theatre imaginable." "Not

a doubt of it," answered Sunderland. " We'll haul down all those shattered banners that are fit only to harbour spiders; level the time-beaten monuments; and as for St. Antholine in the altar-piece, take the liberty of turning the gentleman out of his own dwelling." " The chapel," interrupted Lady Selina. " Yes, my dear," rejoined her sister. " Now don't look so threatening, for when you feel devoutly inclined you have only to go there, shut your eyes, say your prayers, and where's the difference?" " Merciful heaven! can such sacrilege be permitted?" exclaimed Antonia, turning horror-struck away. " Nay, who is to prevent it?" said the duchess, laughing. " St. Antholine can't defend himself, and we, the mighty rulers, have decreed—" " The Marquis of Allingthorn will prevent it," interrupted Selina, firmly—" I will acquaint him with the proposed plan: depend upon it he will not

have a stone removed, for the chapel must be sacred." "The great hall will answer quite as well," said Colonel Arkerman. "I suppose it must," replied Lady Geraldine, glancing angrily at her sister; "of all torments, over religion is the most troublesome. Hush!" she continued, placing her finger on her lip, "here comes Dauverne—hush! or we shall have a sermon a yard long. Does your grace remember the grand *fête* at Lady Howison's, when her darling, Sir Septimus, came of age?" "Oh dear, yes!" replied the duchess. "The finest grown baby I ever saw; why I actually thought I should have expired when he led me up to dance." "And his brother," resumed her ladyship, laughing, "positively they were the completest pair of negatives I ever beheld." "Faith!" said Lord Carberry, "both together won't make an affirmative." "He is come from the

grand tour a finished beau," observed Lord Westbrook; "and in the contrast to his brother,

" Proclaims with many a grace,
And many a strange contortion of the face,
How much a dunce that has been sent to roam
Excels a dunce that has been kept at home."

At an early hour the party retired to their several apartments; and while we leave them recovering the fatigues of the journey, we will endeavour to describe the mansion, to which the reader has been so lately introduced.

Antholine, the great, the brave, the mighty Antholine, favourite of his sovereign and general of his armies, harangued his troops as he formed them in order of battle: the bow and arrow, the spear, the lance, the javelin, and the battle-axe, were already sharpened; and Bellona smiled at the preparations for destruction. Suddenly a heavy darkness came over all the land; a deep

sleep weighed down the eyelids of the warrior—he threw himself on the ground, a stone formed his pillow, and sunk into a trance. He dreamt that a monk descending from heaven predicted the defeat of the Romans; and as he vanished from his sight pointed to the stone on which he rested—“Dedicate unto heaven a monastery,” said the vision; “call it St. Antholine’s: be thou thyself the abbot, and let thy pillow form the corner stone.”

The general awoke—the morning dawned—the action commenced—the enemy was routed—the monastery erected—the conqueror canonized—and the legend concluded. Such was the force of superstition in that dark era of ignorance. The altar-piece, in a small chapel opening from the cloisters, perpetuated the dream; and posterity smiled at what once served to impress on the bigotted mind the strength of religious enthusiasm.

St. Antholine's was a large gothic pile, sited in an extensive park, which, in conformity to the taste of its present possessor, swept its verdure to the very edge of the cliff; and covered with hardy shrubs and drooping evergreens, impended over the rough surface of the English Channel. The centre of the building, repaired and modernized, was alone habitable; while a flank of towers, formerly its defence, but now, alas! "nodding to *their* fall," mouldered around; and gateways, battlements, oratories, and belfries, alike marked that every effort of man cannot rescue the work of his hands, from sinking down the all-devouring gulph of oblivion. From the chapel, whose windows were still ornamented with painted glass, and various curious devices, opened a long range of cloisters, mantled with ivy and falling to decay; the owl sought shelter in its branches, and nightly

hooted from her hiding place ; while the thistle, and the unshorn spiral grass, grew through the desolated pavement, and undisturbed and luxuriant, " their long beards whistled in the wind." Ever and anon were seen peeping fragments of stone rolled from dilapidated tombs, which once in carved characters, proclaimed the virtues of the dust they covered ; for

—————" transient is the smile of fate.

A little rule, a little sway,
A sun-beam in a winter's day,
Is ALL the PROUD and MIGHTY have
Between the cradle and the grave !"

In the servant's hall many a tale of horror was circulated : murder was reported to have profaned the sacristy ; and ghosts and goblins nightly stalked their rounds. The stoutest hearts were frequently dismayed ; and even those who by the cheerful fire laughed at the terrors of their companions, would, as the wind sighed down the long

passages and arched galleries, apparently echoing the plaintive yell of despair, quicken their pace, and tremble at what had been.

“ Did the spirits of the good friars disturb your slumbers, Miss Forrester ?” inquired the Earl of Carberry, seating himself by her side. “ A strange question to address to a lady !” said Lord Westbrook, laughing : “ why you don’t imagine you will be taken for a confessor ?” “ And why not ?” asked the Duchess of Delaware. “ I am sure my policy would prefer him to a spiritual mentor, for the erring will allow for frailty.” “ Charming humility !” satirically remarked Lady Geraldine. “ I do think your grace should be held up as an emblem of the patient virtues.” “ Such an emblem,” rejoined the viscount, “ would swell the list of followers : for even I should become a devotee.” “ Pardon me,” said Lady Selina, “ I think, when that

decree passes, all present followers will become apostates." "Will you be Faith? will you be Hope? or will you be Charity?" questioned Lady Geraldine. "*Charity* must be left for Lady Selina," replied the duchess; "and yourself I'll nominate my handmaid, Meekness." "Let me be Hope," said Sunderland, glancing at Lady Geraldine, "and as for Faith, you must seek her elsewhere." "Famously disposed of," exclaimed Lord Carberry. "Our visit at St. Antholine's will lead to some good end, however," remarked Lady Selina, "for it promises reformation." "I know not to what it will lead," rejoined Sunderland, "for last night I was dreaming of the devil." "Indeed," said Selina, archly, "was he come to claim you?" "Talking of dreams," said the Marchioness of Allingthorn, addressing her lord, "what was the matter last night? You terrified me

almost to death: thrice you called on Antonia, breathed the most heart-rending sighs, and awoke with strange agitation; again you dropped asleep; again you pronounced her name, and in a groan, nay, almost shriek, articulated, "I have murdered her!"

The marquis turned pale, started from his chair and walked hastily to the window; while Lady Selina and Antonia exchanged looks of wonder and commiseration. Towards the middle of the day, escorted by Mr. Dauverne and Captain Glendenning, the two young friends rode to Falmouth. What a contrast to the fashionable folly at St. Antholine's met their eyes! age attended with reverence, and declining nature soothed by filial affection. Mrs. Powersly pale and feeble, was reclining on a sofa, her head supported by pillows: her daughter, the Countess of Carberry, was seated by

her side; before her stood a small work-table; her netting was in her hand, but more frequently were her dark eyes fixed on her parent, or uprose to the throne of mercy, supplicating support and fortitude. In the features of the invalid, you might

“ behold
 The poor remains of beauty, once admired;
 The autumn of *her days* *was* come already,
 For sorrow made the summer haste away.”

While the lovely, interesting Cecilia, like a drooping lily blasted by an untimely frost, portrayed the un murmuring image of meekness and resignation. “Is this the woman,” thought Antonia, gazing on the countess, “whom Lord Carberry has ceased to love? Blind unthinking man! to cast from him a being who might temporize his failing—might teach him her virtues.” “This early visit is kind,

my dear Selina," said the countess; "none other," and a hectic flush tinged her fair cheek, "volunteered the excursion to Falmouth." "I was anxious to see you," replied Selina, regardless of the insinuation; "and Miss Forrester, who, though personally a stranger, has long been intimate with the virtues of my friend, eagerly seconded the proposition." "Then I hope you will stay with us," pursued the countess: "Mr. Dauverne, and Captain Glendenning, will in the evening return to St. Antholine's, and for excuse plead charity." "What say you?" faintly articulated Mrs. Powersly, addressing Antonia. "Your countenance, Miss Forrester, is not formed for denial; and the pleasure arising from such society will contribute much to the relief of my too anxious Cecilia."

A tear started to her eye—she raised her emaciated hand to conceal it from

her daughter. "You see I am interested," she continued, forcing a smile, "for I acknowledge it is a visit which cheerfulness would shun." "I wish the plan was practicable," said Lady Selina, "but indeed, Cecilia, we have promised to return to dinner: our next visit shall be at least for a week." "And that not long first," remarked Dauverne, who struck by the mournful and apparent illness of Mrs. Powersly had preserved a pensive silence. "Thank you," resumed the invalid, gratefully extending her hand. "The attendance on a sick-room depresses the spirits, and steals from the brow of youth the fire of hope and the bloom of contentment: Cecilia, like a froward child, has too long felt the bliss of happiness to encounter affliction without a murmur: calamity is a hard lesson: she forgets," and a saint-like serenity illumined her features, "that 'the rugged thorn—bears the fragrant

rose." "Have you heard lately from Captain Powersly?" inquired Dauverne, wishing to change the conversation. "I hope we shall soon see him," said Lady Carberry: "we hourly expect his return from a cruize." "Heaven grant we may!" ejaculated Mrs. Powersly, and she struggled to suppress a doubtful sigh. "He will give a good account of his embassy," exclaimed Glendenning: "like Britain's dauntless heroes, he will peep into the very harbours of the enemy, and in spite of the devil, compel them to action. What need we fear on the island, when our bulwark, our boast, our safe-guard, rides triumphantly in defiance of the united force of Spain and France; in defiance of Bonaparte and his legions, of Charles and his myrmidons?" "True to ourselves we may dare the united powers of the whole world," said Dauverne, exultingly: "justice is our guide, and

freedom our aim—for heaven has given us in a *king*, a father to his people; and as a *defence*, a barrier impregnable to our foes." "Once, such was my reasoning," said Mrs. Powersly—"once the very sound of martial music would wind me up to a pitch of enthusiastic spirit almost to be denominated courage. To be the wife of a hero was my pride—to hear the name of Powersly coupled with bravery and honour, my highest gratification: but now I am grown a very coward; the brilliant dream of patriotism declines with health; for I confess myself alive only to maternal fears and maternal tenderness. I think of my boy till renown vanishes—till I could almost keep him at home—till I could almost hide him in my heart to shield him from danger." "Oh, fie, fie!" said the countess, taking her hand and affectionately pressing it. "What would my brother say to such lan-

cheerfulness. "If all mothers were like Mrs. Powersly, the age of patriotism would be revived; and like the Roman dames of old, our sons would be a race of heroes." "Sadly has the race degenerated!" said Dauverne. "Bond-street is a specimen of the effeminacy of *modern* taste and *modern* customs. There was a time, when the fashionable beau would have been hooted as a rare species of deformity, known but to be ridiculed and despised. Could our forefathers rise from their tombs and see the streets crowded with loungers, when the country claims the assistance of her sons, how would they start with dismay and horror! How would they fearfully inquire,—Can this be Britain? can this be the island which with our best blood we disputed—with existence we maintained?" "True," observed Glendenning; "but even in our time the page of history teems with heroes;

and posterity will wonder and admire, when perusing the records of a Nelson, an Abercrombie, a Smith, and a Moore." "Yes, and a thousand others," rejoined Dauverne, "could merit be the passport to greatness. But *interest*, that base, that sordid word, *interest* often exalts folly and tramples on worth; often winks at fools and neglects experience." "Nay, we will not enter into the *partial* distribution of favours," replied Glendenning, "or of the *propensities* of men in power: some admire virtue—some wit—some beauty; but from time immemorial all are prone to error: how then can we wonder that the recommendation of a *bewitching favourite* out-leaps every other *leap*, and places a *brother*, a *lover disguised*, or what not in affluence. I merely affirm that courage glows as unsullied in the present day as ever marked the annals of unenlightened barbarism." "Put an in-

fant in the water," resumed Dauverne, " and it will struggle for life ; make it sensible of danger and instantly it becomes inactive. Courage, in my estimation of the word, consists not in the heroic valour which the noise and hurry of battle ever inspires ; nor in the indifference which a man holds towards life : when placed in such situations, were he to consider himself he would merit the stigma of cowardice. True greatness and magnanimity displays itself when the victory is atchieved—displays itself in the cool, temperate, forgiving calm, which with the truly brave ever succeeds the maddened frenzy of battle, and stamps with humanity the name of conqueror." " Spoken like a very general," exclaimed Glendenning, laughing ; " but my good fellow, you wander from the point. Remember—" " Come, come, prorogue the argument for a further hearing," interrupted

Lady Selina, rising to depart. "Patience, my dear girl!" said Lady Carberry, laying her hand on the arm of her friend. "Do let us hear to whom the badge of victory is to be awarded—besides, Miss Forrester appears deeply interested in the debate." "I was thinking," said Antonia, and an animated blush suffused her countenance, "that humanity and moderation, succeeding intrepidity and success, marks the greatest of all conquests—the empire over our own passions." "It does," remarked Mrs. Powersly; "and those who hold up to posterity a name branded with blood, and hateful to their fellow creatures, are not heroes, but butchers; are not men, but monsters. Woefully has a sister kingdom experienced the truth of the assertion! Woefully has republicanism, sacrilege, and murder reigned, extirpating in the general wreck, virtue, renown,

and true courage ! Farewell, my sweet patriot !” shaking Antonia by the hand ! “ your sentiments may inspire emulation, for youth and beauty are powerful auxiliaries ; while mine like old women are laid on the shelf, unattended to by some and laughed at by others.” “ How languid and ill poor Mrs. Powersly looks !” said Lady Selina, as they drove from the door. “ Yet, amidst all her afflictions she retains that unaffected piety and cheerful resignation which ever marked her character ; and which render her a bright pattern of imitation and excellence.” “ I tremble for the countess,” said Dauverne, “ when her exemplary mother shall have ceased to suffer. I fear she flatters herself with false hopes ; for Mrs. Powersly appears to be hastening with rapid strides to that ‘ bourne whence no traveller returns.’” “ Ah, how dreadful must

it be ;" said Antonia, with a sympathetic sigh, " to see the canker of disease, banquetting on the strength and existence of a beloved parent ! To see each day increasing debility, without the power to aid, or the strength of human foresight to redress. Gracious heaven ! had such been my lot—" and tears filled her radiant eyes—" Patience and unrepining compliance to the mandate of fate would have marked your actions," interrupted Dauverne, " and called forth the energies which now only lie dormant."

How gratifying is praise from the lips of those we regard ! Antonia experienced a pleasure in the encomiums of Dauverne, which dimpled her face with smiles, and filled her heart with satisfaction. " The countess is a very lovely woman," said Glendenning : " was she any thing but his wife, Carberry would be the first to acknowledge her merit." " She is a thousand

times too good for him," observed Lady Selina; "too submissive, too meek, too tender—had he married a Duchess of Delaware, his conduct might have been excusable." "I am decidedly of your ladyship's opinion," rejoined Glendenning—"I think the man who sports with the sensibility of the heart deserves to be indiscriminately censured; though sorry am I to add, that infidelity is a vice of such increasing growth, that perhaps from custom society winks at its deformity." "Example is beyond precept," said Dauverne; "what the mother does, that will the child mimic; and when the most *exalted* walks in life stamp with the die of fashion the crime of adultery, how can the influence be withheld?"

The first week of their residence at St. Antholine's passed in riding, visiting, and various amusements: Antonia had received a long letter from Mrs.

Moreland, in which, after having lamented her absence and conveyed the artless murmurs of the children at the loss of their favourite, she informed her of the restored vivacity of Sir Frederic Stanley, who unrepining submitted to his fate, and purposed repeating his visit to the vicarage in the ensuing week. "The force of philosophy is strong," thought Antonia, smiling at the intelligence; "Mahala was resigned for me; and why may not I give place to Selina?"

The idea was momentary, but it was pleasing; Sir Frederic she valued as a brother—she knew his intrinsic worth; and that the goodness of his heart would peep forth in spite of all his foibles—she knew Selina to be fondly attached though hopeless and unreturned, she struggled to conquer the prepossession; and she felt, that to see him the husband of her beloved friend, would yield her real and permanent pleasure.

The sun setting with uncommon splendour, and leaving the face of creation serene and smiling, reflected his last trembling rays on the agitated surface of the ocean, as the company repaired to the drawing-room. "What a heavenly evening!" exclaimed the marchioness. "Why I protest, even the old cloisters look inviting!" "Oh, amazingly so to owls and bats!" remarked the Duchess of Delaware, carelessly reclining on a couch. "And the admirers of antiquity," resumed the marchioness: "Miss Forrester, for instance, will affirm that yon gothic window, so closely mantled with the entwining ivy, is an object far more pleasing than any which modern genius can invent." "Miss Forrester's taste is not the criterion to judge by," said Lady Geraldine. "Pity but it was," replied Selina, "for then innocence would become the fashion, and folly would be exploded." "Lord,

how mighty good we all should be!" drawled out the duchess. "Old men would be wise, young men virtuous; old women prudent, young women bashful; and—" "The world would go to sleep," yawned Sunderland, affectedly reclining his head on the arm of a sofa. "'Tis true, the world would be peopled with a different set," resumed Lady Selina, "for we should have neither *coquets* or *corcombs*; neither *neglectful wives* or *careless husbands*."

The duchess laughed; while Lady Geraldine contemptuously inquired the name of this new system? "Reformation," replied her sister, drily, "or, a peep into the follies of the times; or, if you like it better—A change of administration in the oligarchy of fashion—" "At the instigation of *friend Selina*," concluded Lady Geraldine. "Oh, Carberry, Carberry!" addressing the earl, "I

had hoped the mischief extended no farther than the demolition of the barouche; but verily I say unto *thee*, posterity will have cause to rue the adventure, for unto them will spring up, not a race of heroes, but a race of preachers." "Well," said Glendenning, "if luxury continues to increase as it has done within the last century, not one, nay, nor twenty races will be sufficient to subvert its influence."

"Bless me! Captain Glendenning is of that side the cause," exclaimed Lady Geraldine. "Can it be wondered at," observed Colonel Arkerman, "when Lady Selina, and Miss Forrester are its staunch supporters?"

"And are you really an admirer of gothic architecture, Miss Forrester?" inquired Lord Carberry. "Can you like to ramble among the time-beaten ruins of former magnificence?"

"To me, my lord," replied Antonia, "though melancholy, they wear a

pleasing aspect; for they reprove the existence of false pride, by holding up a mirror, in which the reflective mind may trace the fall of empires, and the destruction of earthly splendour."

" 'Tis a prospect not half so pleasing as the study of the human countenance," pursued the earl, in a low voice; "especially when we behold so ample a field for admiration," and his eyes ardently rested on her features, for

"Angels are painted fair to look like thee;
There's in thee all that we believe of heaven."—

"What says your grace to a ride this evening?" asked the Marchioness of Allingthorn. "And on our return we may either discuss the subject further, or change it for something more entertaining."

The proposal was instantly acceded to, and the carriages ordered. "Come, Miss Forrester," continued the marchioness, "Captain Glendenning will

drive you and Selina in the phaeton." "You will excuse Miss Forrester," exclaimed the marquis, starting from a reverie. "I wish to take an uninterrupted walk with my ward." "Walk!" repeated the astonished marchioness; "whenever I have started the proposition, your lordship has always preferred walking by yourself." Possibly, Caroline," he mildly replied, "but to night, if Miss Forrester will favour me, I wish for her society." Antonia bowed. The marchioness pouted. "Don't you go with us, my dear Antonia?" inquired Lady Selina, who then entered the room. "No, Selina," said the marchioness, proudly, "Miss Forrester remains at home to keep your father company." "Miss Forrester remains at home in compliance with my request," said the marquis. "I wish to have some conversation with her on a serious subject."

The duchess glanced significantly at Lord Westbrook, and smothered an

ironical smile, while Carberry, in a whisper, deplored the decision. No sooner had the party driven from St. Antholine's than the marquis took the hand of Antonia. "Put on your hat," he said, "and let us depart. Your countenance betrays amazement: the request is indeed the offspring of melancholy, for the spot whither I shall conduct you, is one from which imagination never wanders—is one which reminds me of what has been; which reminds me of a being who suffered the severest afflictions, who endured the bitterest trials—who bent sorrowing to the grave without a murmur, for heaven had given her a comfort which no earthly blessing can bestow—innocence."

They quitted the park, and pursued a narrow path winding along the base of the cliff, which hung, clothed with the deepened purple of the heathy fern, almost perpendicular over head. A deep silence prevailed, save, ever and

anon, when the heart-rending sighs of the marquis burst forth. They had lost sight of St. Antholine's—they had lost sight of the ocean, nay, its very roar could now scarcely be distinguished, for—

“The air *was* hushed save when the weak-
ey'd bat,
With short shrill shrieks, flits by on leathern
wing;
Or when the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,
As oft he rises 'mid the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum.”

Suddenly a turning in the road disclosed an opened prospect—the marquis shuddered—he paused for a few moments; memory seemed to press upon him, and subdue the power of exertion: he struck his hand against his forehead—he closed his eyes—again he started—again he recollected himself—again he grasped her hand.

END OF VOL. II.

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